

Braille Monitor



SEPTEMBER, 1974

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

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"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$____ (or, "____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: ____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR
SEPTEMBER 1974

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CONVENTION ROUNDUP

How does one begin to put into words what goes on at an NFB Convention—the great gathering of people, the strong unity of purpose, the spirit of kinship, policies worked out and given carefully considered decisions for action, the participation of numerous Federal officials, the presence of a large number of state administrators involved in programs for the blind, to say nothing of the attention and lively involvement of the delegates in all parts of the program.

Delegations from forty-eight states and the District of Columbia—over 2100 of them—converged on the Palmer House in the City of Chicago. Although slated for June 30 to July 5 (Sunday through Friday), Convention fever brought many to the Windy City in the middle of the week preceding. The 950 rooms allotted (100 more than last year) were gone by the end of May, and requests for reservations continued to come in. Our National Office and the hotel working together got additional rooms by persuading delegates planning to attend the NEA meeting in Chicago to take housing in other hotels, and wrangled a few more after that. Almost 1100 rooms were used. Even this was not enough and some state delegations, faced with this need for additional space, good-naturedly doubled, tripled, and quadrupled the tenants in their rooms so that as many Federationists as possible could be accommodated at the headquarters hotel.

The solid program, the planned and unplanned social events, NFB Division and Committee meetings, all combined to make this the greatest NFB Convention ever. Our National Office and the host affiliate, the

NFB of Illinois, worked together to make it happen and we are all beholden to them for their tremendous efforts.

This year's program dealt, more than any before, with hard, tough, basic problems of blindness. NAC, rehabilitation, and discrimination against the blind were foremost. Library services, Supplemental Security Income, employment, and problems of older Americans ran close seconds.

The Executive Committee, the Report of the President and those of NFB Standing Committees drew more than usual interest. Organizing, coalitions with other groups of the disabled, and overseas activities competed for and received attention.

At all sessions blunt questions were put, especially to Federal officials, and in most cases the demand for firm answers was met.

This was an election year and that always has its own brand of excitement. All was topped by our yearly, but always unique, Banquet; and some unusual business at the President's Reception.

Monday Morning, July 1

Executive Committee Meeting

Each year it takes a larger room to accommodate the many Federationists who attend Executive Committee meetings. The crowd this year was the largest ever. As is usual in recent meetings, the President took a number of consensus votes from those assembled to listen in on the work of the organization's governing board.

After reviewing the problems involved in trying to house everyone at the headquarters hotel and saying that it was, indeed, a very delightful problem, the President noted that this was the largest percentage increase in Convention attendance in the history of the National Federation.

The officials of the NFB of Illinois—Norman Bolton, president of the State affiliate, and Steven Benson, president of the Chicago chapter, gave us a rousing welcome.

Among the usual business of the organization generally discussed at Executive Committee meetings, some subjects were given special emphasis and several unusual matters came up: The admission of a new affiliate; the nomination of members to the NFB Board; our organization's relationship with the International Federation of the Blind and coalitions of the disabled; and the unanticipated decision of two NFB officers not to seek re-election.

During the session, NFB Second Vice President James Coutts announced that he would not stand as a candidate for office. Franklin VanVliet asked for the floor and made the following statement:

Mr. VANVLIET. As many of you know, in the fall of 1970 I had a time which saw me set aside on the disabled list for a few weeks. I was told at that time by my doctors that I must slow down if I had any desire to live a reasonably useful life. Sometimes we just don't heed what we're told. We hear it and just go on our merry way. During the past year I was warned on several occasions that I should heed the medical advice previously given. In May of

this year I was told by my doctors that I must cut out all activities not essential to my well being. The growth of the Federation and the other increasing activities of the Office of the Treasurer was actually physically more than I am able to cope with. With this in mind, I wish to take this occasion to announce that I will be retiring as Treasurer of the National Federation of the Blind and will not permit my name to be submitted as a candidate. And though I retire, I wish to phrase it in such a manner that whomever you select as the successor to the office that it be one who can give his all physically to it. Though I retire, I wish to make it very clear that I will continue to hold the banner of the Federation high, and wherever and whenever possible, I will do what I can to carry on the fight for the blind everywhere. Thank you, Mr. President. [Loud applause]

President JERNIGAN. It is with real sorrow that I hear that announcement. I am aware of those facts. Some of you will remember that I said at the last election that I hoped that as long as I was President of the organization that Franklin VanVliet would continue as its Treasurer. That now is perhaps not the case. Franklin, we appreciate the service that you have given to this organization and we know that you will do exactly what you say—and would have known it if you hadn't said it—which is, that you will continue on as much in the fight as ever.

Nominations to the Board of Directors: These terms all expire each year. The Convention must confirm or reject nominations made by the Executive Committee. Mr. Sundquist, in a very

gracious speech, nominated Dr. Jacob Fried, who has been elected each year since 1963; Dr. Isabelle L. D. Grant, first elected in 1960; and Mark Maurer, president of the Student Division. The nominations were approved for recommendation to the Convention by the Executive Committee.

President JERNIGAN. I want to welcome our newest affiliate. We are now only three away, and we now have Oklahoma in the Federation. You are going to hear a good deal of interesting material when the full report of the Oklahoma organizing is given; a report of harassment on the part of the agency and the ACB combined to try to keep the blind of that State from organizing with an independent voice. But you're also going to see, as you meet our new president in Oklahoma, that we have a responsible and a tough-minded leader there. I want you to meet Ethel Susong, president of the NFB of Oklahoma.

Mrs. SUSONG. I would like to say hello to everyone here in the National Federation of the Blind of the United States of America. Truly Oklahoma is going to do great things. We started out sitting alone; then we started crawling; now we're beginning to toddle a little bit. I want you to know that the workers in Oklahoma are really energetic workers. We have a number of things in mind to do. We have added a number of new members since our organizational meeting. We are getting ready to organize our fourth chapter. With you encouraging us, I know we're going to the top. We are all fighters, and we intend to fight for our organization. [Much applause] Thank you.

President JERNIGAN. That leaves us only three states to go. You remember that we

made a compact with ourselves back in Houston, that 1975 was the deadline date. We've got South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Vermont to go. They'll all be in this next year. [Applause]

Shirley Lebowitz moved and Ned Graham seconded the motion to accept the application of Oklahoma for membership in the NFB, which was unanimously approved.

President JERNIGAN. Recently Jim and Arlene Gashel have been talking with John Black, the lawyer who represents the postal workers. We have had some problems with them in the past over income from vending machines which we think should go to blind vendors and not to the postal workers. S. 2518, which contains the Randolph-Sheppard Act amendments, was amended in some ways which we think harmful to the blind. Mr. Black, as I understand it, says that it's not that the postal workers object to the money going to blind people, but they have some concern about how much of it goes to some of the agencies. And we said, "Brother, we're with you. We're concerned about it, too." So the upshot of all that is that we may be able to arrive at some understanding with the postal workers who, from what Jim Gashel tells me, seem to be pretty reasonable people as represented by their lawyers—and I'm pleased to tell you that Mr. John Black is here in the room today. [Cheers and applause]

The President then invited Mr. Black to say a few words.

Mr. BLACK. I'm very happy to be here today. I've never been with a more

beautiful crowd, particularly in an executive board meeting. [Laughter] Executive board meetings as I understand them are pretty secret things. [Laughter] We don't conduct business in the open. However, I do hope that in talking with your committee this afternoon, that we can arrive at some resolution of this problem so that—I am not here to make commitments on behalf of the union—I can't do that—but I can carry back your message to them. I think that it's high time that we sit down and talk together because we've never done that before, on any real basis. I think it would be very helpful if we did. My discussions with Jim lead me to believe that we have a lot of common ground and we can iron some of this out and get rid of some of these problems—and maybe we can come up with a bill that everybody can support and finally get the Randolph-Sheppard Act amendments enacted into law. [Applause]

President JERNIGAN. Thank you so much. Mr. Black, we're delighted that you're with us. We know that the Postal Union represents clout—we've had occasion to experience it in the past. You can see that from being here we represent the blind of this country, so let's get together. [Applause]

President JERNIGAN. There are several ways in which resolutions may be brought to the Convention floor for consideration. One method is that any member of the Executive Committee may present a resolution to the Committee for recommendation to the Convention. We have two subjects for the Executive Committee to consider and upon which to make recommendations: (1) our relations with IFB; and (2) coalitions of the disabled.

The President then read a resolution dealing with the IFB and there was some general discussion. He said that for a number of reasons then presented, henceforth all fundraising for the IFB would be funneled through the National Office and would not be done—except by arrangement—by state and local affiliates. He continued: "We are not relinquishing our international role or commitments. We are re-evaluating the channels through which that role and those commitments will be demonstrated."

Perry Sundquist moved that the resolution be recommended by the Executive Committee to the Convention for adoption. There were several seconds and the motion was adopted.

The second resolution dealt with the relationship of the organized blind to coalitions of the disabled. On that subject the President said: "Should the blind organize and deal with matters concerning blindness and should that be the primary concern of the organization; or, is it wise for us either as a national group, or as local and state affiliates, to permit coalitions with groups of the otherwise disabled? That is the question, and I think it needs discussion fully. All sides ought to be heard. When we're through with it we'll go out with one united voice. But in the meantime, it ought to be talked about, threshed around some. We're going to give it a full and complete airing on Friday afternoon; everybody will be heard within the limits of the time we've got. We won't be too hurried about it; and then we're going to vote on it. We are not going to allow any kind of devious resolutions on it. We're going to vote squarely on the issue: Shall we have coalitions in this organization or not? But we'll consider any resolution or

motion which anybody may want to make—but when we get through there's going to be a chance for a vote straight on the issue. . . .”

Characteristically, President Jernigan said: “The very reading of the resolution constitutes some argument. Therefore, if somebody wants to take—not to exceed five minutes—even though he is not a member of the Executive Committee—to talk about the other side of this, I think it only fair to offer that opportunity. I feel strongly that the basic democracy of this organization must be preserved, and that, in a matter of this kind, regardless of how many or how few votes they may have, the people who feel another way on a matter of this importance simply have to have an opportunity to be heard fully and respectfully and thoughtfully. That has always been our way and it's going to continue to be.” Mr. Marcelino moved that the Executive Committee recommend to the Convention the adoption of the resolution on coalitions. There were several seconds.

A number of people spoke against the motion and against the resolution. On Friday afternoon, July 5th, a full discussion of this issue took place and is reported elsewhere in this issue.

The motion to recommend the resolution to the Convention was adopted unanimously.

One other new move was made. The President declared that given the number of our members and the variety of their professions, it was no longer necessary to look outside the organization for men or women of the cloth to lead us in prayer and to pronounce opening invocations. He

forthwith appointed NFB Second Vice President Donald Capps as chairman (and only member) of the committee to make the proper arrangements.

NFB Divisions Meet

Monday afternoon was devoted to meetings of all NFB Divisions. The presidents and/or chairpersons reported to the Convention on their activities in a short group session late on Wednesday afternoon. The general consensus was that this was the best year ever for NFB Divisions. Each group reported growing memberships and enlarged fields of activity. Their programs were crowded, consumer oriented, and the participants—that is, those who addressed the groups—left with some notion of the growing strength, knowledge, and interests of Federationists in controlling their own destinies. All Division leaders stressed, too, that while there is much special activity in the groups, everyone's focal point is still the Federation and the endeavor to improve the lot of all the blind.

The Music Division, chaired by Janiece Peterson, got the jump on the others by convening Sunday evening. Among its other projects, that group will work on public relations and attempt to change the generally held public attitude that while the blind are all musical, not many are good musicians.

The National Federation of the Blind in Computer Science, under president Robert Ray, is making progress in improving devices in data processing for use by the blind. Curtis Willoughby was elected president.

The National Association of Blind Secretaries and Transcribers, whose

president is Anita O'Shea, reported that if the Civil Service Commission will not publish the handbook the Division prepared for the use of blind transcribers, the Division will.

The NFB Teachers Division, under the leadership of Robert Acosta, has prepared and is publishing a number of handbooks for the use of teachers and those who aspire to enter the field. The Division is also receiving support from national groups of educators in the fight to end discrimination in hiring because of blindness.

The NFB Merchants Division, whose president is Jim Ryan, is concentrating its efforts on obtaining legislation to eliminate the set-aside by reducing the percentage over a period of years. They are also contributing moral support and financial aid to those merchants who find it necessary to bring legal action to obtain their rights.

The NFB Students Division, led by Marc Maurer, reported the addition of seven new chapters—Arizona, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Kentucky, and South Carolina. It, too, is preparing and has already published, handbooks for the use of students. The Division is working with other groups in the opening of international exchange programs to blind students.

The NFB Sheltered Shop Employees Division, whose president is Ysidro Urena, reported that having spent three years in educating itself, the group is now moving to aid others—especially those, such as the shop employees in Tennessee, who are on strike. The effort of the Shop Employees Division is to bring the rights of all workers to those who labor in sheltered shops.

Tuesday, July 2

A joyful roar of anticipation went up from the assembly as the President gavelled the 1974 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind to order on the morning of Tuesday, July 2. Kathryn Thompson of our Utah affiliate won the first drawing—a \$100 bill. As those who have attended NFB Conventions know, each morning session starts with the drawing for that famous \$100 generously donated by our friend from St. Louis, Bernard Gerchen. First Vice President and chairman of the Invocations Committee Donald Capps, introduced the Reverend Walter Witasek, member of our Brockton, Massachusetts chapter and an ordained Methodist minister, who delivered the invocation. We were all made welcome by the president of the NFB of Illinois, Norm Bolton, and the president of the Chicago chapter, Steve Benson, who noted with pride some of the adventures available to those who might enjoy the sights and sounds of a city such as Chicago has to offer.

Then came the always dramatic roll call of the States. And, as usual, the first call by the President—Alabama—brought another great cheer as the Convention feels that that point is the real beginning of business. According to custom, each state announced its voting delegate or delegates and appointed its own member to serve on the Nominating Committee. When Sylvester Nemmers, president of the NFB of Iowa, introduced Iowa's most distinguished blind American, our President, a long standing ovation ensued.

States enjoy noting interesting bits about their delegations or their activities. Among them was the fact that a number of

octogenarians, some of whom have not missed a Convention in years, were present. Euclid Raines, who coaches a Little League team, proudly told us that with a record of 15-2 this season, his Eagles were about to win their third straight championship in the Middle Sand Mountain Baseball League. Tennessee announced that the sheltered shop workers in their State were on strike, and received a pledge of support.

Wisconsin, with a delegation of eleven, asked to be, and was, included in the regular roll call. Bob Hunt, chairman of the NFB's CEIP Committee, presented a number of foreign guests.

The President introduced us to new TV and radio spots with the tag line "Blind and successful? Well, we're here to tell you." These, along with those produced in previous years, are to be distributed by local and state affiliates. Some are now on national networks. These spots are probably the best way to make the National Federation of the Blind and the work we all do for each other known in your community.

The morning session concluded with an exuberant rendition by all present of our NFB Marching Song.

Tuesday afternoon was filled with a variety of business and interesting papers. The Presidential Report lead off, followed by a brief Report from the Berkeley Office. Dr. Jacob Freid, Executive Director, Jewish Braille Institute, delivered another of his ebullient addresses on the subject of employment of the blind. It appears elsewhere in this issue. Frank Kurt Cylke, Chief of the Division for the Blind and

Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress; and Mrs. Florence Grannis, Assistant Director in Charge of Library and Social Services, Iowa Commission for the Blind, read papers and held some interesting discussion with the members of the Federation during the program item "Library Services for the Blind: A Look Ahead." Their papers and some of the discussion also appear elsewhere in this issue. The day was closed with a lovely program by the Utah Melodonic Chorus, whose membership is ninety-five percent blind; the meeting of the Nominating Committee; and good fellowship for all in the Red Lacquer Room.

The Presidential Report

The President sketched the great progress of the organization during the past year and considered the formidable problems which lie ahead. He reported on finances, on production of *The Braille Monitor* and our other releases and materials, on their handling, storage, and distribution. He spoke of training leaders and lawyers and how much they mean to the organization. Then he noted two new ventures:

President JERNIGAN. We started two new things in November. We started sending out Presidential Releases on cassette. [Applause] Most of you are familiar with that effort and with its results. I'm trying each month—we'll get at least ten a year, to summarize happenings during the month. The cassette will not run more than twenty-minutes. We are asking that every chapter play them at monthly meetings. You, as individual members should see that your local president does not summarize the cassette. Your local presidents should see to it that your members do not just get a summarized version. This is a message

from the National President to the individual members which they have a right and a responsibility to hear. [Applause] Not this year, but I remember one time a member said to me, "Well, I don't really find some of these letters particularly entertaining or interesting." And I said, "Well, I didn't send them to you to entertain you. I don't care whether you find them entertaining or not. I send them to you to inform you." Anyway, I have had a tremendous response on the cassettes and we will continue that program; and, again, it takes money. . . .

Also in November we started our NFB box of candy. That box of candy is designed and has most of the message contained in the pamphlet "What is the NFB" written on it. It has our seal and emblem. It's good candy. It is available, as you know, at prices that enable the state or local affiliate to make good money. It does not make the National Office of the Federation any money, but it is a means for local fundraising. I think, however, that in every local fundraising effort, every local chapter should remember the state office of the Federation and also the National—and every state should remember the National. [Applause] In this movement there is no room for "we" and "they," and "you" and "us." We're either one movement or we're dead. Write to the National Office if you need more information on our candy project.

We have had another development: For a long time a number of Federationists have said we should have our own aids and appliances and not need to go to the American Foundation and other groups. [Cheers and applause] So we've revved up and we do have our own aids and appliances. My notion about those is this:

That we sell them and sell them at what we think will be cost, that is, the actual cost price plus maybe five or ten percent, in order to take care of those that get ruined and some of the packaging problems. But I'd also like from this group the discretion in hardship cases to make them available without cost to the extent that we can. [Applause] In approving this report, if you do, you will be approving the policy statements laid down in it. But let's deal with this item now. Those of you—and if we need to discuss it, if there's any dissent, then we'll put it over and discuss it—but let me take a test try at it and see where you are. Those who are willing to have the kind of policy which would say that we sell the aids and appliances as I've indicated in particular cases where it seems a hardship case, and make them available to the extent funds are available, without cost or at a reduced cost, will you say "aye." Those who feel that that's unwise, will you say "no." [There was one "no" vote.] There's an article on aids and appliances giving you the prices and what they are and a little description about them which will appear in the August *Monitor*. I think that you will find it quite complete and we will have overruns made so that you can get extra copies of the list.

During the past year, as you know, we have carried on a variety of law suits. In the first place we have had the Weckerly case successfully concluded. [This is more fully reported elsewhere in this issue.] . . . In Missouri we were not so successful, though I can't see how the ACB can take much comfort out of what they got. Our affiliate there was the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri. We had quite a law suit about it all. So what did we come out with? We are now the National Federation of the Blind in Missouri. [Applause] Spell

it *of* or *in*, we're still there. [Cheers and applause] In the Cleveland law suit, we have now taken depositions—a week of them. We have examined the financial records of the Cleveland Society. We have taken a day-long deposition from Cleo Dolan who is head of the Society. They know we've been there and our case looks better and better in that one. The Judy Miller case in Colorado is still pending. We do not know when it will be settled but we have real hope and faith in what is going to happen there. We also have the case in Michigan which you have heard about involving Joseph Varghese; the case where people were dismissed from employment allegedly because they were members of the National Federation of the Blind. Obviously it goes without saying that we will not let something like that stand. [Applause] . . .

During the past year we've moved a lot closer, I think, to dealing with our problem with NAC. NAC had to open its board meeting for the first time. It has claimed to have a policy of openness all along. We know better; they know better; I believe the GAO knows better; I believe that some of the Congressmen know better; I know that HEW knows better; and yet we all play the game—NAC has a policy of openness. It wasn't the truth. We know it and they know it. Nevertheless, for the first time in Cincinnati at the last meeting they held "an open Board meeting" which meant that people could go; yet they held a closed meeting, they said, to talk about personnel. We don't know what they talked about right before their open meeting. They then undertook to be insulting about it all. They said they would hear from our representative, and they said they would hear from a representative of our Virginia affiliate concerning the disgraceful behavior

of one of the NAC Board members in that State. So what did they do? They held their board meeting and then they officially adjourned their meeting and those who wanted to stay could stay and hear our representatives. Individually I am not concerned about whether we are treated insultingly. We are accustomed to being insulted by experts, but I am concerned when the organized blind in this country receive an official insult from agencies established to give them service; that's a different question. [Applause] I suspect that there are those in this audience who will be able to take back the word to NAC, so let me say something here for NAC. And that is this: NAC has undertaken in every way they could to put us down, has undertaken in every way they could to give us insults, to try to do damage to our character and our reputation—in every way they have undertaken to hurt the blind people that they are established to serve. But we are not asking for mercy from NAC. We're not asking NAC to stop it. As far as I'm concerned, NAC, you can do the very worst you can and we will do likewise to you. [Loud cheers and applause] A lot of Federationists have been affected deeply by the NAC experience. As an example, I had a call recently from a Federationist who said, "Sure the NAC thing has been a long battle, but nothing has brought me closer, or made me feel closer organizationally to the movement than the NAC business."

Then there is disability insurance, and again, in this area we made progress during the past year. In fact, if you just consider the things I've reviewed with you—has there ever been a year of progress like this for the blind of this country? I think not.

[Applause] In disability insurance Congressman Mills has asked that we say to this Convention, that although the bill is not out of the Conference Committee yet, that we may carry his personal message to this Convention that it will be out of Conference Committee this summer, and favorably. [Applause] If the disability insurance bill passes, and I believe that it has an excellent chance of passing this year, it will mean more at one stroke for the blind of this Nation than any other single piece of legislation that has ever been adopted. And it was the National Federation of the Blind—it was the organized blind—that did it. [Applause]

As you know, during the last year the Chief of our Washington Office resigned. John Nagle has given long and good service to this organization. John Nagle's successor as Chief of the Washington Office is Jim Gashel. He and Arlene Gashel working in that office are going to give excellent, and, I believe, brilliant service to our movement. You will be hearing from them later in this Convention.

Let me now say just a few words to you in conclusion concerning the relationship of the National Office to affiliates and individuals and the national presidency to individuals and affiliates. The workload in the National Office continues to increase. That is a good sign, not a bad sign, and I recognize the fact that the National Office and the national presidency belong to the individual members. You must, however, use your property wisely. People who send me cassettes should face the fact that I am likely not going to listen to them. Why? Well, I'm not because I am dealing with something like one hundred letters per week, which I now answer, and if I read a cassette—people usually feel that they need

to fill a cassette—it takes a while to get a machine out and set it up. If I then answer on cassette I don't have carbons of it so that I can refer to it quickly. I takes a half-hour or forty-five minutes to do that and if I opened the floodgates on it, I'd get fifty cassettes a week. I cannot. And therefore, if you send a cassette to me, and if I do not respond to it, recognize the fact that it may be six months or a year before I see it and that I may never listen to it; I cannot. Also, you should recognize the fact that it is not wise to send a letter to me if it needs to go to the Berkeley Office and not tell me that you have sent it or a copy to the Berkeley Office. It's a great help if I don't need to reply to your letter, if you'll tell me on the bottom each time—"No reply necessary." I'm really grateful to people who do that because if you write me a letter and I can at all, I feel that courtesy to you as a member demands that I make a response, even if it is only a ceremonial response. I would like to respond to every letter that I get. I cannot. I'll write to you, likely, though, if you do not indicate to me that I don't need to. If you send a letter for materials, or a telegram for materials, give us enough lead time on it that we've got time to respond to it. Let me show you something that happens. If a blind guy gets out and sells candy, he makes for our organization a little over fifty cents per box. We ought to use that money wisely. So let's talk about how some of it is used. I had a recent illustration I want to show you. That illustration runs like this: I had a wire from a Federationist—actually it was a Mailgram—which I got on Wednesday and it said the state convention was to start on Friday night; and I was asked to send out, airfreight, a great amount of material. I sent it but I asked the individual involved to please consider that it cost of his money,

and yours, and mine, fifty dollars plus to mail it out when I could have sent it at virtually no cost at all if the request had been sent earlier. That is not a good use of our money. So give me lead time on what you want sent out to you, as much as you can. If you can't, of course, we'll send it out to the best ability of the National Office. But I need lead time from you.

What should a state affiliate send to me and what should it not send? I responded to that and indicated what I thought, and I said this: "Your letter of May 4 addressed to Mrs. tenBroek has been referred to me for answer. It is sometimes difficult for state affiliates to send needed information to the National Office as often and as thoroughly as we would like. However, some lost motion is to be expected in a grass roots people's movement. In any case, let me tell you the kind of information which the National Office would like to have as well as the frequency with which it is needed. An up-to-date list of all state and chapter officers should be sent to me in the National Office at least once each year. A copy should be sent to Mrs. tenBroek in the Berkeley Office and I should be informed that the copy has been sent to Mrs. tenBroek. In addition, it would be helpful if I could have, on or before January 1 of each year, a complete list of the members of the state affiliate including their names and addresses together with the information as to which, if any, are non-voting members. The membership list need not be sent to Mrs. tenBroek. It would be helpful if I could know of changes in the state presidency or the chapter presidency as soon as such changes occur. Again, Mrs. tenBroek should also be given this information and I should be told that she has it. State affiliates, and usually this job should be done by the state

secretary, should feed a variety of other information into the National Office. New names for *The Monitor* to Mrs. tenBroek without copies to me. Information about any unusual occurrences in the state concerning internal affairs of the affiliate, sent to me but not to Mrs. tenBroek. Information concerning programs for the blind in the state and other matters relating to the blind, sent to Perry Sundquist as Editor of *The Monitor*, and also to me and Mrs. tenBroek; and any other items which the affiliate feels the National Office should know." That's a summation of what I told her I thought I needed.

The final thing I want to speak to you about very briefly is the relationship of the national presidency to the affiliate and individual members. Now, we have opponents as I don't have to tell you, and those opponents would like to separate out the national presidency from the membership. In the NAC battle particularly, some of the GAO people have asked some of our delegates and representatives, "Did Mr. Jernigan send you," or "Is Mr. Jernigan doing this?" or "Is this a one-man battle that's a personality thing between Jernigan and NAC?" HEW tries to do this all the time. I don't blame them. I would, too, in their place. It's the best defense they've got. Separate out if they can the members from the presidency—that's what they ought to do. They won't succeed; but that's what I'd try if I were in their place; I don't blame them at all. [Applause] Also, people sometimes tell individual members that I said or did this or that; sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't. The answer is that you ought to take me by what you see from the National President. [Applause] I must reiterate for you again something that I've said at almost every Convention. Any letter

that you send me and tell me that it's confidential, you should know ahead of time that I will determine whether I want to keep it confidential or not—and that if I don't, if I think it needs to be circulated, I will send it to whatever person I want to send it to. If you do not want me to do that, then don't send me the letter. [Applause] That doesn't mean that I don't keep confidences. I do. It does mean, as I gave you an example once, let's take the extreme—the President of the United States gets a letter from, let us say, a citizen of the State of Ohio, and it says: "Mr. President, I'm going to shoot the Governor tomorrow night. It's confidential; don't tell him." [Laughter] Unless the President is a madman, he'll tell him. So, therefore, if you write me and I think it affects the organization, the letter may be circulated. I do not receive letters in a private capacity. I cannot divorce myself from the presidency of this movement. Therefore if anyone sends me a letter, I am going to do with it what I think I ought to in the interest of the movement. [Applause]

You have got to help share the workload. I am going—if I get a letter as a result of our public service spots or something else—I am going to refer that letter to various state and national leaders at times and say, "Please handle this." If I do, will you please handle it and send me copies. That's one way of dividing up the load and you can help do it.

So let me conclude by saying this to you: Ever since 1971, we've been on a sharply ascending curve organizationally—in power, in prestige, and, I think, in responsibility. We must exercise with care the very considerable power inherent in an organization as large and as broadly representative as we are. We must also,

however, recognize that there are dangers any time a group makes as many waves as we have; we can expect to be subjects of vicious counter-attacks. Now, I think that it is in that context that we must view our situation. During the American Revolution, you know, the leaders said: "We pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Well, in retrospect that sounds like rhetoric. But think about it; it wasn't just rhetoric. It meant what it said. If the American Revolution had failed, George Washington would not have been celebrated as a hero. He would have been hanged as a traitor. He did pledge his life. As to his fortune, he wouldn't have had any; they would have confiscated it on the spot. And as to his sacred honor, he wouldn't have had it either because he would have been regarded as guilty of treason to his king. We are in too far to go back, even if we would. If you take us as a group, blind people in this country, we have pledged our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor—because although they are not going to come out and kill us in the usual sense of that word, life is going to be a different kind of life, and for some blind persons, not really worth the living if this movement does not succeed. And furthermore, [applause] as to fortune, although some of us as individuals may do well financially, the blind as a class can expect very little except the same old custody and care, shelter and pity, and contempt which we have always received if we don't succeed in this movement. And as to our honors, already there are people who try to make us appear to be less than human by what they've said and done and how they felt. I've said to you before and I say to you again, as President of this organization I think I have a contract and agreement, a mutual obligation with you as members. You have the same. I have

responsibilities and so do you. As I see it, this is an organization, a political action organization; it is an army; it is a crusade. It is all of those things combined. It has various aspects of all of those things. As I see it, it is my duty not to hesitate, not to count the cost personally, it is my duty to lead where I ought to lead, stand out on the cutting edge and be willing to take the risk and not count what it may do to me as a person, even if it costs me my job, if it costs my reputation, costs whatever money I have—whatever it costs, it is for me to be prepared to give it. Otherwise I am not fit to lead the movement. But, it is up to you as members to do all you can to make that job successful. It is up to you as members of this movement to be willing to give as much as you can in the way of your time, your effort, your money, your dedication, and your commitment. If you are not willing to do that, you are not fit to be members of the movement. [Applause] In other words, those who believe that the primary purpose of this movement is a nice little game, or a social tete-a-tete, would do better to go elsewhere; they will find it more fun. But those of us who intend to see this thing through and to make lives better for blind people in this country and to improve our own status in the world will stay to the end and we will prevail. [Prolonged cheers and applause] Thank you very much. I think that both opponents and friends should take heed from what all that means. That concludes the Presidential Report.

Wednesday, July 3

Wednesday, July 3, 1974, was quite a day, given the fact that most days at any NFB Convention are very special. It began with the elections and all five officers and five Executive Committee positions were

up this year. It closed with our tremendously successful Banquet. In between there was a provocative panel on rehabilitation legislation; a lively exchange on Supplemental Security Income; a short but comprehensive report from James Gashel, Chief of our Washington Office; a discussion of the problems of older Americans; and the reports of our NFB Divisions.

Elections and Some Other Business

This is probably the first time that the NFB's head and the NFB's heart ever competed, not just for equal time, but for the same time. Elections are, however, one of the more important items on our Convention agenda since that is when we pick our leaders, and interim policy-makers, for the ensuing two years. Elections are always pretty swinging affairs in the NFB, and this year was no exception. "Colonel" Bob Whitehead reported the slate chosen by the Nominations Committee, on which every state affiliate had its own representative. With each office came the three-time call from the Chair "any other nominations from the floor" before action on an office went ahead. There were nominations from the floor for some positions and roll calls were taken. All the officers were elected by acclamation and the close of the vote for President brought a long and hearty standing ovation. The results were as follows: President, Kenneth Jernigan; First Vice President, Donald C. Capps; Second Vice President, Ralph Sanders; Secretary, Lawrence "Muzzy" Marcelino; Treasurer, Richard Edlund; two year Executive Committee terms—Hazel Staley, Ned Graham, Joyce Hoffa, Robert Eschbach; one year Board member (to finish Ralph Sanders' term) Ethel U. Parker. The list is

completed by holdover Committee members Shirley Lebowitz, Kenneth Hopkins, and Perry Sundquist. Board members Dr. Isabelle L. D. Grant, Dr. Jacob Freid, and Student Division President Marc Maurer were also approved by the Convention to complete the list of our Executive Board.

Roll calls, nominations from the floor, motions to close nominations or for vote by acclamation were interspersed with individuals who sought recognition by the President for the purpose of donating money to the Bill Jennings Fund. And who is Bill Jennings to call forth this kind of activity? In a sense the President brought it on himself and should have been forewarned by what happened at the very beginning of the session. As is usual, the President banged the gavel and brought the session to order and immediately called for the drawing for the \$100 bill. George McDermott, president of the Indianapolis Chapter of the NFB of Indiana and an ordained Baptist minister, was standing at the podium ready to deliver the opening invocation. He was the most surprised minister anywhere when his name was called as the winner. As was said before, the President should have been forewarned.

Immediately the President launched into the following statement, saying, in part: "Bill Jennings is from North Dakota. He is a blind guy and he knows about automatic transmissions. He checked with the employment office here in Chicago and they gave him a reference to a place out in Skokie, a suburban town just north of Chicago. He went out there and he pulled down a transmission and put it back together for the man yesterday. The employer said, 'If you get the tools, I'll put you on.' I gather that this is the first time

Bill has ever been offered a good living wage. . . . Now, he's got to have \$1200 worth of tools, and we estimate that he's got to have \$150 to live on until he gets paid. He said that he would like to have help from us but that he would take it only on the condition that he could pay it back. So I said to him, 'All right, we'll get you the \$1350,' and he said that he could go to work on Saturday, *after* the Convention. . . . So, therefore, I said that what we might do, if you are agreeable, is this: Let's see if among the states here we can get \$1350. You can think about it and tell me during the day if you can." Then Bill Jennings said, "I tell you one thing. I came to this Convention a new member and leave a very happy member. I didn't expect to have as much response as I have had. I look forward to doing the work that I can do, not because I'm blind but because I can do the work. I have found that the NFB is not only an organization of people, but an organization of people who care about people. . . ."

The President then announced that he would take contributions after the election. But our impatient delegates couldn't wait. In the end, almost \$200 was collected, and another well-trained blind person has the opportunity to live a normal life.

Wednesday Panels and Reports

"New Federal Rehabilitation Legislation, Public Law 93-112: Trends and Emphases" brought together a number of people well able to deal with the progress and the problems raised by the new legislation and attendant regulations. Members were E. B. Whitten, Executive Director, National Rehabilitation Association, Washington, D.C.; Joseph H. Owens, Jr., Executive Director, Council of State Administrators

of Vocational Rehabilitation, Washington, D.C.; Manuel Urena, Program Manager, Services for the Blind, Department of Rehabilitation, Sacramento, California; T. V. Cranmer, Director, Division of Services for the Blind, Frankfort, Kentucky. The participants did not all view the new legislation in the same way and it was clear that not all were agreed that the new statute as interpreted was an unmixed gain for clients. But the problems were thoroughly discussed and solutions offered. And to officials of the organizations involved, undoubtedly goes the message of how consumers of rehabilitation services feel, especially after some of the very pertinent questions posed by Federationists from the floor.

With wit and grace, Sumner Whittier, Director of the Bureau of Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled, Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland, addressed the subject "SSI One Year Later" and faced the questions from the audience. One need not remind Federationists of what a tangled mess of legislation and regulation this program has become. Mr. Whittier dealt with the problems in a very direct manner and brought to the audience what he calls the Jernigan Amendment. This amendment to the regulations governing the program was initiated by very firm inquiries from our National Office about the fact that blind people over sixty-five years of age who applied for the program in 1974 were put on the rolls as aged and not as blind. Since in many states the SSI payment makes allowance for the increased costs of blindness and is higher than that for the aged, it makes quite a difference to the

blind person. Mr. Whittier's address appears elsewhere in this issue.

"The Older Americans Act: The Promise and the Problem," was discussed with thoroughness and sincerity by Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, Commissioner on Aging, Department of HEW, Washington, D.C.; and Allen Jenkins, Chairman, NFB Committee on the Senior Blind and Administrator, California Orientation Center for the Blind, Albany, California. The Act and its probable lack of financial support makes the promise of seeing its provisions of benefit to the aged in the near future, vague at best. As in other programs for minorities, the best way to receive benefits is to work at it through your own organization.

The Banquet

Although the Banquet is usually held on Thursday evening of Convention Week, this year the organization had to bow to the demands for time and increased expenses involved in holding such an event on a national holiday, July 4; it was shifted to Wednesday night.

The Banquet is more than a brilliant social event. It is more than seeing officials high in government seated with us and sharing great moments. It is more than breaking bread and enjoying good fellowship with other Federationists. It is the highpoint of every Convention—the fountainhead of renewed spirit and dedication. The crowded hall was less boisterous this year, despite the large proportion of young people, and though there was much spontaneous sheering and singing, as usual. But there was an air of reserve and maturity new to the Federation.

Robert Eschbach, president of the NFB of Ohio, and an ordained Methodist minister, delivered the invocation.

The NFB President again surprised and delighted his audience by delivering, as only he can, a great paper on "Blindness: Is Literature Against Us?" The roaring ovation upon its conclusion told its own story of how the address inspired those who were privileged to be present. The address is printed in full in this issue.

The presentation of the Charter of Affiliation to Oklahoma brought another great and happy reaction from the assemblage as they made the delegates from that State welcome to the Federation family.

Ben John Prows, president of the Metropolitan Chapter of the NFB of Oregon was this year's Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship recipient. He is about to enter his second year in law school and the \$1200 which accompanies the award will undoubtedly be most welcome.

It is always hard to see such an event come to a close and some Federationists extended the happy time into the early hours of the next day in a number of informal parties and a great gathering in the Red Lacquer Room.

Thursday, July 4

The Reverend Bennett Tommy Ingle, member of the board of our South Carolina affiliate and ordained minister of the Assembly of God Church, gave the invocation to start a work-packed morning. The afternoon activities were unscheduled except for a meeting of the Public Relations Committee, chaired by Ralph

Sanders. The day was topped off by the President's Reception. The President noted that it was a peaceful, quiet crowd on the morning after.

Some Federation business items were dealt with. In introducing them, the President remarked that as the Federation grows larger, he depends a good deal for continued momentum on its various committees, and especially the committee chairmen. No one person can actively participate in all facets of the Federation operation, though he, as President, does as much as he can. The President must, therefore, delegate; and consequently the committees in this organization are beginning to assume ever more important functions.

The President paid well-deserved tribute to Perry Sundquist, who serves as chairman of the Subcommittee of Budget and Finance, for his many years of labor for the Federation. Perry Sundquist delivered his report to the Convention.

Robert Hunt, chairman of the CEIP Committee then gave his report; introduced his panel for short statements; and we heard from foreign visitors. He urged all affiliates to participate in the Committee's Miss-A-Meal on October 15. One of the important programs of the CEIP is the collection and distribution of Braille books. Ray McGeorge of our Denver affiliate has been and still is in charge of this activity. There is a need for more Braille books. The CEIP Committee has assumed responsibility for the eyeglasses program. Please be sure that the glasses are carefully wrapped. Please ship them in fairly large boxes—shoeboxes are too small—to CARE, Pier 38 South, 156-C, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our committee is also going

to try to raise funds from foundations to support a student exchange program. Mr. Hunt introduced our foreign visitors and each spoke a few words. Dr. Grant very generously gave her time so that we might hear from our guests. She noted that by the time the IFB meets in Berlin a few days later, there would be fifty nations represented—a considerable growth during the last five years.

Then Resolution 74-B, recommended for passage to the Convention by the Executive Committee, was read, discussed, and adopted.

The Oklahoma organizing team gave a report on their successful efforts in that State. Both the ACB organization and the agencies tried to prevent the formation of the group. Members of the team discovered that after contacts were made, followup visits were made to dissuade prospective members, by various forms of intimidation, from joining the NFB. But the group that makes up the Oklahoma affiliate is a fighting organization led by a very determined president, Ethel Susong. Blind people in Oklahoma welcomed and shared what little they had with members of the team.

Henry F. Watts, Executive Director, South Carolina Commission for the Blind, Columbia, South Carolina, addressed the Convention on the subject of "New Perspectives in South Carolina." He reviewed the history of his agency, and past and present programs. It now offers a comprehensive program to the blind and visually handicapped throughout the State. Mr. Watts noted especially the advantages of being an independent commission rather than part of an umbrella agency. Mr. Watts and the representatives of the organized

blind of South Carolina meet and work out their differences and plan for the future together.

The last item discussed at the morning session was "Candy Talks With the Sound of Money" with the president of the Ludwig Candy Company, Mr. Arnold Ludwig, and sales representative Ed Wilkinson making the presentation to the Convention. Since all who attended the Banquet had received a box of these confections the night before and had enjoyed them very much, there was not much of a selling job to do. They did outline the procedures and the problems involved in delivery of candy in quantity for affiliate fundraising projects.

The President's Reception

Thursday evening's reception was gigantic in many ways: in the length of the receiving line; the number of people who attended; and the fun everyone had during the whole evening. There was dancing to a fifteen-piece live orchestra. To say that it was thoroughly enjoyed by all is to put it too mildly.

The receiving line included not only President and Mrs. Kenneth Jernigan, but all present, incoming, and outgoing officers and their respective spouses of the whole Board of Directors; NFB Staff members; and the top officers of the Illinois Federation of the Blind.

But something was added to make it a most significant occasion. As members were greeted by President and Mrs. Jernigan, the President presented each with an NFB membership card. The front of the card says: "National Federation of the Blind. This is to certify that _____ is

a member in good standing of the National Federation of the Blind." Under that there are blanks which will carry the name of the state affiliate and the local chapter and a place for the date of issue. It is duly signed by the President of the National Federation of the Blind, and under his signature is the address and phone number of our National Office. The other side says: "I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and program of the Federation and to abide by its constitution." All true Federationists will find no difficulty with that pledge. The presentation of the membership card seemed most appropriate occurring as it did at a Convention whose unity of purpose was so evident.

Friday, July 5

The last day of the 1974 Convention might well prove to have been the most important and exciting day of all. Discrimination by NAC-accredited agencies, well documented and witnessed, was discussed in the presence of Dr. Andrew S. Adams, the new U.S. Commissioner of Rehabilitation, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of HEW, Washington D.C., and the Assistant Commissioner, Dr. William Usdane. Then the Convention, our President, and Dr. Adams had some talk about the situation.

In the afternoon, we heard some in-house reports of standing committees, considered resolutions, and had another important discussion on coalitions with other groups of the disabled.

The invocation was delivered by the Reverend Howard May, president of the

NFB of Connecticut and active pastor of the Federated Church of Willington.

Hazel Staley, president of the NFB of North Carolina, and David Alexander, a student and vending stand operator in that State, discussed "Discrimination in Education." Mr. Alexander wanted to enroll in the electrical engineering courses at Central Piedmont College but was excluded because of blindness, the school administration saying that it was not safe for him to take the lab courses. But one doesn't push Hazel Staley away from a subject or not give her a straight answer. She informed the school officials that under § 904 of the Education Act Amendments of 1972, their Federal funds were in jeopardy and that she was willing to be peaceful if they would be sensible—but was willing to go to court if they were not. Needless to say, Mr. Alexander will be in those lab courses.

Joyce Hoffa, president of the NFB of Minnesota read a brilliant presentation of the *Kettner* case, outlining the discriminatory practices of the NAC-accredited Minneapolis Society for the Blind (it is printed elsewhere in this issue); and we heard from Lawrence Kettner, who was the subject of the Society's actions.

Under the title "Exploitation in the Sheltered Shop—Kansas," Dick Edlund, president of the NFB of Kansas recounted the efforts of his affiliate to bring sheltered shop workers in his State under the protection of laws granted public employees in Kansas, and to bring them the full measure of pay accorded others. When the minimum wage law was adopted for sighted workers, that is, two dollars an hour, the shop management decided to

raise the pay of their blind employees from \$1.50 an hour to \$1.60 an hour. The workers and the NFB affiliate thought there was a measure of injustice in that move, and by means of strike and petition won recognition for shop workers as public employees.

Our NAC team reviewed the happenings in Cincinnati at the last NAC Board meeting and told in full about "NAC: Confrontation at the Barricades." The report of what occurred in Cincinnati at that time appeared in full in the July issue of *The Braille Monitor*. The panel participants were John N. Taylor, Ralph Sanders, Don Morris, and other members of the NAC Coordinating Committee.

After listening to our members report their problems in dealing with NAC and NAC-accredited agencies, Dr. Adams threw aside his prepared statements on "Accreditation, NAC, and the Quality of Services to the Blind." He spoke instead about discrimination, his ideas of rehabilitation of the handicapped, what he thought their rights were and what they should be, and how the problem of NAC accreditation and NFB criticism should be approached. He began his statement about 11:45 and talked for about a half hour. All of us came back after lunch, eager to continue what was not a debate but a colloquy between Dr. Adams and the NFB President. That exchange and the discussion with the Convention is produced elsewhere in this issue.

Resolutions and reports of standing committees were the order for the next hour. Anthony Mannino, president of the NFB of California and National White Cane Committee chairman, gave his report. The work of the Research and Evaluation Committee was reviewed by its chairman, Robert Morgenstern. The status of the Jacobus tenBroek Memorial Endowment Fund and its work was set out by the

Fund's Secretary, Lawrence "Muzzy" Marcelino. He urged that as many individual contributions as possible be made to the Endowment Fund and that blind persons go to their local organizations throughout the country, as well as the local civil and social organizations, to create a program of widespread public support for the work of the Fund. Mr. Marcelino reminded those present that an "elegant elephant" sale, to raise money for the Endowment Fund had taken place throughout the Convention and that literally hundreds of blind persons had helped make it possible. A number of resolutions adopted in full and by consensus appear in this issue. Full sets of resolutions will be available upon request from the National Office in Des Moines. Others may be published as space is available in future issues of *The Monitor*.

The last item on the agenda which held the attention of the whole Convention and which generated a good deal of discussion on its merits pro and con was the matter of coalition with other groups of the disabled. That discussion, which centered around a resolution proposed and approved for Convention decision by the Executive Committee, appears elsewhere in this issue.

The Convention always breaks up slowly as the delegates are reluctant to leave the place and the time when they renewed friendships, met new people, engaged in debate and discussion on subjects vital to their own interests, and reinvigorated their spirit and determination to work together in unity of purpose to improve the lives of their fellow blind. The great growth and progress of the National Federation of the Blind during the year just completed provides the spur for even greater achievement during the months to come. And it was on that note that the delegates left to take their places on the barricades to battle for Equality-Security-Opportunity. □

BLINDNESS: IS LITERATURE AGAINST US?

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

Editor's Note.—The following is an address delivered by President Jernigan at the banquet of the annual Convention in Chicago, July 3, 1974.

History, we are told, is the record of what human beings have *done*; literature, the record of what they have *thought*. Last year I examined with you the place of the blind in history—not just what we have done but what the historians have remembered and said we have done. The two, as we found, are vastly different.

This year I would like to talk with you about the place of the blind in literature. How have we been perceived? What has been our role? How have the poets and novelists, the essayists and dramatists seen us? Have they “told it like it is,” or merely liked it as they’ve told it?

With history there is at least a supposed foundation of fact. Whatever the twisting or omission or misinterpretation or downright falsehood, that foundation presumably remains—a tether and a touchstone, always subject to reexamination and new proof. Not so with literature. The author is free to cut through facts to the essence, to dream and soar and surmise. Going deeper than history, the myths and feelings of a people are enshrined in its literature. Literary culture in all its forms constitutes possibly the main transmission belt of our society’s beliefs and values—more important even than the schools, the churches, the news media, or the family. How, then, have we fared in literature?

The literary record reveals no single theme or unitary view of the life of the blind. Instead, it displays a bewildering variety of images—often conflicting and contradictory, not only as between different ages or cultures, or among the works of various writers, but even within the pages of a single book.

Yet, upon closer examination the principal themes and motifs of literature and popular culture are nine in number and may be summarized as follows: *blindness as compensatory or miraculous power; blindness as total tragedy; blindness as foolishness and helplessness; blindness as unrelieved wickedness and evil; blindness as perfect virtue; blindness as punishment for sin; blindness as abnormality or dehumanisation; blindness as purification; and blindness as symbol or parable.*

Let us begin with blindness and compensatory powers. Suppose one of you should ask me whether I think there is any advantage in being blind; and suppose I should answer like this: “Not an advantage perhaps: still it has compensations that one might not think of. A new world to explore, new experiences, new powers awakening; strange new perceptions; life in the fourth dimension.”¹ How would you react to that? You would, I suspect, laugh me out of the room. I doubt that a single person here would buy such stereotyped stupidity. You and I know from firsthand experience that there is no “fourth dimension” to blindness—no miraculous new powers awakening, no strange new perceptions, no brave new worlds to

explore. Yet, the words I have quoted are those of a blind character in a popular novel of some time back. (I don't know whether the term has significance, but a blind "private eye," no less.)

The association of blindness with compensatory powers, illustrated by the blind detective I have just mentioned, represents a venerable tradition, reaching back to classical mythology. A favorite method of punishment among the gods of ancient Greece was blinding—regarded apparently as a fate worse than death—following which, more often than not, the gods so pitied the blinded victim that they relented and conferred upon him extraordinary gifts, usually the power of prophecy or some other exceptional skill. Thus, Homer was widely regarded as having been compensated by the gift of poetry. In the same way Tiresias, who wandered through the plays of Sophocles, received for his blindness the gift of prophecy.

The theme of divine compensation following divine retribution survived the passage of the ages and the decline of the pagan religions. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (one of the most eminent novelists of the last century, and the creator of Sherlock Holmes) conjured up a blind character with something of Holmes's sleuthing talents, in a book entitled *Sir Nigel*. This figure is introduced as one who has the mysterious ability to detect by hearing a hidden tunnel, which runs beneath the besieged castle. His compensatory powers are described in a conversation between two other people in the novel:

This man was once rich and of good repute [says one], but he was beggared by this robber lord who afterwards put out his eyes, so that he has lived for many years in darkness at the charity of others.

How can he help in our enterprise if he be indeed blind? [asks his companion.]

It is for that very reason, fair Lord, that he can be of greater service than any other man. For it often happens that when a man has lost a sense, the good God will strengthen those that remain. Hence it is that Andreas has such ears that he can hear the sap in the trees or the cheep of the mouse in its burrow. . . .²

The great nineteenth-century novelist Victor Hugo, in *The Man Who Laughs*, reflected the view of a host of modern writers that blindness carries with it a certain purity and ecstasy, which somehow makes up for the loss of sight. His blind heroine, Dea, is portrayed as "absorbed by that kind of ecstasy peculiar to the blind, which seems at times to give them a song to listen to in their souls and to make up to them for the light which they lack by some strain of ideal music. Blindness," says Hugo, "is a cavern to which reaches the deep harmony of the Eternal."³

Probably it is this mystical notion of a "sixth sense" accompanying blindness that accounts for the rash of blind detectives and investigators in popular fiction. Max Carrados, the man who talked of living in the "fourth dimension," first appeared in 1914 and went on to survive a number of superhuman escapades through the 1920's. In 1915 came another sightless sleuth—the remarkable Damon Gaunt, who "never lost a case."⁴ So it is with "Thornley Colton, Blind Detective," the brainchild of Clinton H. Stagg; and so it is with the most illustrious of all the private eyes without eyes, Captain Duncan Maclain, whose special qualities are set forth in the deathless prose of a dust jacket: "Shooting to kill by sound, playing chess with fantastic precision, and, of course, quickening the hearts of the opposite sex,

Captain Maclain has won the unreserved admiration of reviewers.”⁵

Even the author is carried away with the genius of his hero: “There were moments,” he writes, “when powers slightly greater than those possessed by ordinary mortals seemed bestowed on Duncan Maclain. Such moments worried him.”⁶

They might worry us, as well; for all of this mumbo jumbo about abnormal or supernatural powers doesn’t lessen the stereotype of the blind person as alien and different, unnatural and peculiar. It makes it worse.

Not only is it untrue, but it is also a profound disservice to the blind; for it suggests that whatever a blind person may accomplish is not due to his own ability but to some magic inherent in blindness itself. This assumption of compensatory powers removes the blind person at a stroke of the pen from the realm of the normal—the ordinary, everyday world of plain people—and places him in a limbo of abnormality. Whether supernormal or subnormal does not matter—he is without responsibility, without rights, and without society. We have been conned into this view of second-class status long enough. The play is over. We want no more of magic powers and compensations. We want our rights as citizens and human beings—and we intend to have them!

It is significant that, for all their supposed charm and talent, these marvelous private eyes without eyes almost never get the girl. The authors plainly regard them as ineligible for such normal human relationships as love, sex, and marriage. Max Carrados put it this way in replying to an acquaintance who expressed

great comfort in his presence: “Blindness invites confidence,” he says. “We are out of the running—for us human rivalry ceases to exist.”⁷

This notion of compensatory powers—the doctrine that blindness is its own reward—is no compliment but an insult. It robs us of all credit for our achievements and all responsibility for our failings. It neatly relieves society of any obligation to equalize conditions or provide opportunities or help us help ourselves. It leaves us in the end without the capacity to lead a regular, competitive, and participating life in the community around us. The blind, in short, may (according to this view) be extraordinary, but we can never be ordinary. Don’t you believe it! We are normal people—neither especially blessed nor especially cursed—and the fiction to the contrary must come to an end! It is not mumbo jumbo we want, or magical powers—but our rights as free people, our responsibilities as citizens, and our dignity as human beings.

Negative as it is, this image of compensatory powers is less vicious and destructive than some others which run through the literature of fiction and fantasy. The most damaging of all is also the oldest and most persistent: namely, the theme of blindness as total tragedy, the image summed up in the ancient Hebrew saying, “The blind man is as one dead.” The Oedipus cycle of Greek tragic plays pressed the death-in-life stereotype to its farthest extreme. Thus, in *Oedipus Rex*, in which the king puts out his own eyes, the statement occurs: “Thou art better off dead than living blind.” It remained, however, for an Englishman, blind himself, to write the last word (what today would be called “the bottom line”) on blindness

as total disaster. John Milton says in *Samson Agonistes*:

Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age! . . .
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live,
Dead more than half. . . . a moving grave,⁸

What is most striking about this epic poem is not the presence of the disaster concept (that might have been expected) but the fact that Milton of all people was the author. His greatest writing (including *Paradise Lost*) was done after his blindness. Then why did he do it? The answer is simple: We the blind tend to see ourselves as others see us. Even when we know to the contrary, we tend to accept the public view of our limitation. Thus, we help make those limitations a reality. Betrayed by the forces of literature and tradition, Milton (in his turn) betrayed himself and all others who are blind. In fact, he actually strengthened and reinforced the stereotype—and he did it in spite of his own personal experience to the contrary. The force of literature is strong, indeed!

The disaster concept of blindness did not stop with Milton. *William Tell*, the eighteenth-century play by Schiller, shows us an old man, blinded and forced to become a beggar. His son says:

Oh, the eye's light, of all the gifts of Heaven
the dearest, best! . . . And he must drag on
through all his days in endless
darkness! . . . To die is nothing. But to have
life, and not have sight—Oh, that is misery
indeed!⁹

A century later the disaster concept was as popular as ever. In Kipling's book, *The Light That Failed*, no opportunity is lost to tell us that blindness is worse than death. The hero, Dick Helder, upon learning that he is to become blind, remarks: "It's the living death. . . . We're to be shut up in the dark . . . and we shan't see anybody, and we shall never have anything we want, not though we live to be a hundred."¹⁰ Later in the book, he rages against the whole world "because it was alive and could see, while he, Dick, was dead in the death of the blind, who, at the best, are only burdens upon their associates."¹¹ And when this self-pitying character finally manages to get himself killed (to the relief of all concerned), the best Kipling can say of him is that "his luck had held till the last, even to the crowning mercy of a kindly bullet through his head."¹²

Joseph Conrad, in *The End of the Tether*, kills off Captain Whalley by drowning, as a fate much preferable to remaining alive without sight. In D. H. Lawrence's *The Blind Man*, there is a war-blinded casualty named Maurice, whose total despair and misery are unrelieved by any hint of future hope; and Rosamond Lehmann, in her novel *Invitation to a Waltz*, goes Lawrence one better—or, rather, one worse. Her war-blinded hero, although he appears to be living a respectable life, is portrayed as if for all practical purposes he were a walking corpse. He leads, we are told, "a counterfeit of life bred from his murdered youth." And when he brings himself somehow to dance with a former sweetheart, it is a sorry spectacle: "She danced with him," says the author, "in love and sorrow. He held her close to him, and he was far away from her, far from the music, buried and indifferent. She danced with his youth and his death."¹³

For writers such as these, the supposed tragedy of blindness is so unbearable that only two solutions can be imagined: either the victim must be cured or he must be killed. A typical illustration is Susan Glaspell's *The Glory of the Conquered*, of which an unkind critic has written: "It is a rather easy solution of the problem to make her hero die at the end of the book, but probably the author did not know what else to do with him."¹⁴

Let us now leave tragedy and move to foolishness and helplessness. The blind man as a figure of fun and the butt of ridicule is no doubt as old as farce and slapstick. In the Middle Ages the role was regularly acted out on festive holidays when blind beggars were rounded up and outfitted in donkey's ears, then made to gibber and gesticulate to the delight of country bumpkins. Reflecting this general hilarity, Chaucer (in "The Merchant's Tale") presents a young wife, married to an old blind man, who deceives him by meeting her lover in a tree while taking the husband for a walk. The Chaucerian twist is that the old man suddenly regains his sight as the couple are making love in the branches—whereupon the quick-witted girl explains that her amorous behavior was solely for the purpose of restoring his sight. Shakespeare is just as bad. He makes the blinded Gloucester in *King Lear* so thoroughly confused and helpless that he can be persuaded of anything and deceived by any trick. Isaac, in the Old Testament, is duped by his son Jacob, who masquerades as Esau, disguising himself in goatskins, and substituting kid meat for the venison his father craves—all without a glimmer of recognition on the part of the old man, who must have taken leave of the rest of his senses as well as his sense of sight.

An unusually harsh example of the duping of blind people is found in the sixteenth-century play *Der Eulenspiegel mit den Blinden*. The hero meets three blind beggars and promises them a valuable coin to pay for their food and lodging at a nearby inn; but when they all reach out for the money, he gives it to none of them, and each supposes that the others have received it. You can imagine the so-called "funny ending." After they go to the inn and dine lavishly, the innkeeper demands his payment; and each of the blind beggars therupon accuses the others of lying, thievery, and assorted crimes. The innkeeper—shouting "You people defraud everyone!"—drives the three into his pigsty and locks the gate, lamenting to his wife: "What shall we do with them, let them go without punishment after they have eaten and drunk so much, for nothing? But if we keep them, they will spread lice and fleas and we will have to feed them. I wish they were on the gallows."¹⁵ The play has a "happy ending," but what an image persists of the character of those who are blind: criminal and corrupt, contagious and contaminated, confounded and confused, wandering homeless and helpless in an alien landscape. Their book of life might well be called "Gullible's Travels."

The helpless blind man is a universal stereotype. In Maeterlinck's play, *The Blind*, all of the characters are portrayed as sightless in order to make a philosophical point; but what emerges on the stage is a ridiculous tableau of groping, groaning, and grasping at the air.

One of the very worst offenders against the truth about blindness is the eminent French author of our own day, Andre Gide, in *La Symphonie Pastorale*. A blind reviewer of the novel has described it well:

"The girl Gertrude at fifteen, before the pastor begins to educate her, has all the signs of an outright idiot. This is explained simply as the result of her blindness. . . . [Gide] asserts that without physical sight one cannot really know the truth. Gertrude lives happily in the good, pure world the pastor creates for her. . . . Gertrude knows next to nothing about the evil and pain in the actual world. As a sightless person she cannot consciously know sin, is blissfully ignorant, like Adam and Eve before eating of the forbidden fruit. Only when her sight is restored does she really know evil for what it is and recognize sin. Then, on account of the sinning she has done with the pastor without knowing it was sinning, she is miserable and commits suicide."¹⁶

In literature not only is blindness depicted as stupidity but also as wickedness, the very incarnation of pure evil. The best-known model is the old pirate "Blind Pew," in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. When the young hero, Jim Hawkins, first encounters Pew, he feels that he "never saw a more dreadful figure" than this "horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature"; and when Pew gets the boy in his clutches, Jim observes that he "never heard a voice so cruel, and cold, and ugly as that blind man's."¹⁷

A much earlier version of the wicked blind man theme is seen in the picaresque romance of the sixteenth century, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Lazarillo is apprenticed as a guide to an old blind man, who is the very personification of evil. "When the blind man told the boy to put his ear to a statue and listen for a peculiar noise, Lazarillo obeyed. Then the old man knocked the boy's head sharply against the stone, so his ears rang for three days. . . ."¹⁸

Throughout the ages the connection between blindness and meanness has been very nearly irresistible to authors, and it has struck a responsive note with audiences—audiences already conditioned through folklore and fable to believe that blindness brings out the worst in people. Given the casual cruelty with which the blind have generally been treated, such villainous caricatures have also provided a convenient excuse and justification. After all, if the blind are rascals and rascallions, they should be handled accordingly—and no pity wasted.

Alternating with the theme of blindness as perfect evil is its exact reverse: the theme of blindness as perfect virtue. On the surface these two popular stereotypes appear to be contradictory; but it takes no great psychological insight to recognize them as opposite sides of the same counterfeit coin. What they have in common is the notion that blindness is a *transforming* event, entirely removing the victim from the ordinary dimensions of life and humanity.

Blindness must either be the product of sin and the devil or of angels and halos. Of the latter type is Melody, in Laura Richards' novel of the same name: "The blind child," we are told, "touched life with her hand, and knew it. She knew every tree of the forest by its bark; knew when it blossomed, and how . . . Not a cat or dog in the village but would leave his own master or mistress at a single call from Melody."¹⁹ She is not merely virtuous; she is magical. She rescues a baby from a burning building, cures the sick by her singing, and redeems alcoholics from the curse of drink.

It is passing strange, and what is strangest of all is that this absurd creature is the

invention of Laura Richards, the daughter of Samuel Gridley Howe, a pioneer educator of the blind. Like Milton, Mrs. Richards knew better. She was betrayed by the forces of tradition and custom, of folklore and literature. In turn she betrayed herself and the blind, and gave reinforcement to the stereotype. Worst of all, she doubtless never knew what she had done, and thought of herself as a benefactor of the blind and a champion of their cause. Ignorance is truly the greatest of all tragedies.

The sickest of all the romantic illusions is the pious opinion that blindness is only a blessing in disguise. In *The Blind Girl of Wittenberg*, by John G. Morris, a young man says to the heroine: "God has deprived you of sight but only that your heart might be illuminated with more brilliant light." Every blind girl I know would have slapped his face for such insulting drivel; but the reply of this fictional female is worse than the original remark: "Do you not think, sir," she says, "that we blind people have a world within us which is perhaps more beautiful than yours, and that we have a light within us which shines more brilliantly than your sun?"²⁰

So it goes with the saccharine sweet that has robbed us of humanity and made the legend and hurt our cause. There is Caleb, the "little blind seer" of James Ludlow's awful novel, *Deborah*. There is Bertha, Dickens' ineffably sweet and noble blind heroine of *The Cricket on the Hearth*, who comes off almost as an imbecile. There is the self-sacrificing Nydia, in *The Last Days of Pompeii*; and there is Naomi, in Hall Caine's novel, *Scapegoat*. But enough! It is sweetness without light, and literature without enlightenment.

One of the oldest and cruelest themes in the archives of fiction is the notion of blindness as a punishment for sin. Thus, Oedipus was blinded as a punishment for incest, and Shakespeare's Gloucester for adultery. The theme often goes hand in hand with the stereotype of blindness as a kind of purification rite—an act which wipes the slate clean and transforms human character into purity and goodness. So Amyas Leigh, in Kingsley's *Westward Ho*, having been blinded by a stroke of lightning, is instantly converted from a crook to a saint.

Running like an ugly stain through many of these master plots—and, perhaps, in a subtle way underlying all of them—is the image of blindness as *dehumanization*, a kind of banishment from the world of normal life and relationships. Neither Dickens' blind Bertha, nor Bulwer-Lytton's Nydia, when they find themselves in love, have the slightest idea that anybody could ever love them back—nor does the reader; nor, for that matter, do the other characters in the novels. Kipling, in a story entitled "They," tells of a charming and apparently competent blind woman, Miss Florence, who loves children but "of course" cannot have any of her own. Kipling doesn't say why she can't, but it's plain that she is unable to imagine a blind person either married or raising children. Miss Florence, however, is magically compensated. She is surrounded on her estate by the ghosts of little children who have died in the neighborhood and have thereupon rushed to her in spirit. We are not meant to infer that she is as crazy as a hoot owl—only that she is *blind*, and therefore entitled to her spooky fantasies.

The last of the popular literary themes is that which deals with blindness not literally

but symbolically, for purposes of satire or parable. From folklore to film the image recurs of blindness as a form of death or damnation, or as a symbol of other kinds of unseeing (as in the maxim, "where there is no vision, the people perish.") In this category would come H. G. Well's classic "The Country of the Blind"; also, *The Planet of the Blind*, by Paul Corey; and Maeterlinck's *The Blind*. In the short story by Conrad Aiken, "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," blindness becomes a metaphor for schizophrenia.

In virtually all of these symbolic treatments, there is an implied acceptance of blindness as a state of ignorance and confusion, of the inversion of normal perceptions and values, and of a condition equal to if not worse than death. The havoc wrought upon the lives of blind people in ages past by these literary traditions is done, and it cannot be undone; but the future is yet to be determined. And that future, shaped by the instrument of truth, will be determined by us. Self-aware and self-reliant—neither unreasonably belligerent nor unduly self-effacing—we must, in a matter-of-fact way, take up the challenge of determining our own destiny. We know who we are; we know what we can do; and we know how to act in concert.

And what can we learn from this study of literature? What does it all mean? For one thing, it places in totally new perspective the pronouncements and writings of many of the so-called "experts" who today hold forth in the field of work with the blind. They tell us (these would-be "professionals," these hirelings of the American Foundation for the Blind and HEW, these pseudoscientists with their government grants and lofty titles and

impressive papers) that blindness is not just the loss of sight, but a total transformation of the person. They tell us that blindness is not merely a loss to the eyes, but to the personality as well—that it is a "death," a blow to the very being of the individual. They tell us that the eye is a sex symbol, and that the blind person cannot be a "whole man"—or, for that matter, presumably a whole woman either. They tell us that we have multiple "lacks and losses."²¹

The American Foundation for the Blind devises a 239 page guidebook²² for our "personal management," with sixteen steps to help us take a bath, and specific techniques for clapping our hands and shaking our heads. We are given detailed instructions for buttering our bread, tying our shoes, and even understanding the meaning of the words "up" and "down." And All of this is done with Federal grants, and much insistence that it is new discovery and modern thought.

But our study of literature gives it the lie. These are not new concepts. They are as unenlightened as the Middle Ages. They are as old as Oedipus Rex. As for science, they have about as much of it as man's ancient fear of the dark. They are not fact, but fiction; not new truths, but medieval witchcraft, decked out in modern garb—computerized mythology. What we have bought with Our Federal tax dollars and our technology and our numerous government grants is only a restatement of the tired old fables of primitive astrology and dread of the night.

And let us not forget NAC (The National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped). when the members of NAC and its accredited

minions try to act as our custodians and wardens, they are only behaving in the time-honored way of the Elizabethan “keepers of the poor.” When they seek to deck us out in donkey’s ears and try to make us gibber and gesticulate, they are only attempting what the country bumpkins of six hundred years ago did with better grace and more efficiency.

We have repudiated these false myths of our inferiority and helplessness. We have rejected the notion of magical powers and special innocence and naiveté. Those who would try to compel us to live in the past would do well to look to their going. Once people have tasted freedom, they cannot go back. We will never again return to the ward status and second-class citizenship of the old custodiansim. There are many of us (sighted and blind alike) who will take to the streets and fight with our bare hands if we must before we will let it happen.

And we must never forget the power of literature. Revolutions do not begin in the streets, but in the libraries and the classrooms. It has been so throughout history. In the terrible battles of the American Civil War, for example, the writers and poets fought, too. When the Southern armies came to Bull Run, they brought with them Sir Walter Scott and the image of life he had taught them to believe. *Ivanhoe* and brave King Richard stood in the lines with Stonewall Jackson to hurl the Yankees back. The War would have ended sooner except for the dreams of the poets. And when the Northern troops went down to Richmond, through the bloody miles that barred the way, they carried with them the Battle Hymn of the Republic and Harriet Beecher Stowe. It was Uncle Tom and little Eliza who fired the shots and led the charges that broke the

Southern lines. Never mind that neither Scott nor Stowe told it exactly as it was. What they said was believed, and believing made it come true.

To the question *IS LITERATURE AGAINST US?* there can be no unqualified response. If we consider only the past, the answer is certainly yes. We have had a bad press. Conventional fiction, like conventional history, has told it like it isn’t. Although there have been notable exceptions,^{2,3} the story has been monotonously and negatively the same.

If we consider the present, the answer is mixed. There are signs of change, but the old stereotypes and the false images still predominate—and they are reinforced and given weight by the writings and beliefs of many of the “experts” in our own field of work with the blind.

If we turn to the future, the answer is that the future—in literature as in life—is not predetermined but self-determined. As we shape our lives, singly and collectively, so will we shape our literature. Blindness will be a tragedy only if we see ourselves as authors see us. The contents of the page, in the last analysis, reflects the conscience of the age. The structure of literature is but a hall of mirrors, giving us back (in images slightly larger or smaller than life) exactly what we put in. The challenge for us is to help our age raise its consciousness and reform its conscience. We must rid our fiction of fantasy and imbue it with fact. Then we shall have a literature to match reality, and a popular image of blindness to match the truth, and our image of ourselves.

Poetry is the song of the spirit and the language of the soul. In the drama of our

struggle to be free—in the story of our movement and the fight to rid the blind of old custodialism and man's ancient fear of the dark—there are epics which cry to be written, and songs which ask to be sung. The poets and novelists can write the words, but we must create the music.

We stand at a critical time in the history of the blind. If we falter or turn back, the tragedy of blindness will be great, indeed. But, of course, we will not falter, and we will not turn back. Instead, we will go forward with joy in our hearts and a song of gladness on our lips. The future is ours, and the novelists and the poets will record it. Come! Join me on the barricades, and we will make it come true!

FOOTNOTES

1. Ernest Bramah, *Best Max Carrados Detective Stories*, p. 6.
2. Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sir Nigel*, p. 102.
3. Victor Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs*, p. 316.
4. Isabel Ostrander, *At One-Thirty: A Mystery*, p. 6.
5. Baynard Kendrick, *Make Mine Maclain*, dust jacket.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
7. Bramah, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
8. John Milton, *The Portable Milton*, pp. 615-616.
9. Friedrich Schiller, *Complete Works of Friedrich Schiller*, p. 447.
10. Rudyard Kipling, *Selected Prose and Poetry of Rudyard Kipling*, p. 131.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
13. Rosamond Lehmann, *Invitation to the Waltz*, p. 48, quoted in Jacob Twersky, *Blindness in Literature*.
14. Jessica L. Langworthy, "Blindness in Fiction: A study of the Attitude of Authors Towards Their Blind Characters," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 14:282, 1930.
15. Twersky, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
17. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, p. 36.
18. *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes*, summarized in Magill's *Masterplots*, p. 2573.
19. Laura E. Richards, *Melody*, pp. 47-48.
20. John G. Morris, *The Blind Girl of Wittenberg*, p. 103.
21. Reverend Thomas J. Carroll, *Blindness: What It Is, What It Does, and How to Live With It*. This entire book deals with the concept of blindness as a "dying," and with the multiple "lacks and losses" of blindness.
22. American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., *A Step-by-Step Guide to Personal Management for Blind People*. This entire book is taken up with lists of so-called "how to" details about the

routines of daily living for blind persons.

23. There is a *tenth* theme to be found here and there on the shelves of literature—a rare and fugitive image that stands out in the literary gloom like a light at the end of a tunnel. This image of truth is at least as old as Charles Lamb's tale of *Rosamund Gray*, which presents an elderly blind woman who is not only normally competent but normally cantankerous. The image is prominent in two of Sir Walter Scott's novels, *Old Mortality* and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, in both of which blind persons are depicted realistically and unsentimentally. It is evident again, to the extent at least of the author's knowledge and ability, in Wilkie Collin's *Poor Miss Finch*, written after Collins had made a serious study of Diderot's *Letter on the Blind* (a scientific treatise not without its errors but remarkable for its understanding). The image is manifest in Charles D. Stewart's *Valley Waters*, in which there is an important character who is blind—and yet there is about him no aura of miracle or even of mystery, no brooding or mischief, no special powers, nothing in fact but naturalness and normality. Similarly, in a novel entitled *Far in the Forest*, H. Weir Mitchell has drawn from life (so he tells us) a formidable but entirely recognizable character named Philetus Richmond “who had lost his sight at the age of fifty but could still swing an axe with the best of the woodsmen.”

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NAC UNMASKED: THE KETTNER CASE

BY

JOYCE HOFFA

It is not surprising that the Minneapolis Society for the Blind is accredited by NAC. As a matter of fact, the Society's disgraceful behavior in the Kettner case merely bears out the Federation's contention that the agencies NAC accredits are among the worst of the lot.

NAC would like the world to believe that its standards have some relevance to the nature of programs for the blind. To hear NAC tell it, one would assume that attainment of accreditation *means* something—that accreditation provides assurance to the blind and to the public at large that the agency in question operated a quality “professional” program—that its entire performance has been carefully scrutinized by the best available experts in the field and has presumably measured up.

How then, does one resolve such a clear disparity between the virtuous characteristics NAC alleges can be expected of an agency which has won its coveted accreditation and the despicable behavior exhibited by the Minneapolis Society. For we are not here dealing with matters of opinion, or philosophy, or procedure, or semantics, or differing constituencies, or too small a meeting room, or any of the 101 other considerations by which NAC customarily weasles away from the issues. The Kettner travesty *did* occur. The documentation *does* exist. The Minneapolis Society *is* accredited. The Society *did* knowingly and intentionally play fast and loose with minimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Society *did* certify Kettner as incapable of standard

competitive productivity. Kettner *is* competitively productive. Do NAC standards really condone such behavior? Do they prohibit it? Do they say nothing about it? Or are the standards themselves merely window dressing on the whole facade—with accreditation having nothing really at all to do with the kind of service an agency gives—being instead a function of money, power, and prestige? Or did NAC simply make a colossal mistake in accrediting the Society? Were its “experts” incapable of analyzing productivity records? Or did they not dig deep enough—looking only at those things Society officials wanted to show them? Did they not bother to talk to workers in the shop? Or did they talk only with those hand-picked workers brought to them by Society officials? Or perhaps were Society officials designated to be on the on-site visit teams slated to review the “experts’” agencies? If so, now that it knows the facts, will NAC withdraw its accreditation? Or will NAC refuse to acknowledge that Kettner occurred?

Let us examine NAC's position, for surely even NAC cannot stand idly by in this case. NAC's standards regarding minimum wage payments in sheltered workshops are woefully inadequate. Paltry as they are, the Minneapolis Society fails to meet them. NAC begins by defining a sheltered workshop as “a non-profit organization, public or voluntary, operated for the purposes of providing work training and employment to blind persons who are unable to meet the requirements of regular

competitive employment, or for whom such employment is not available.”

(As a sidelight, notice the use of the word “voluntary.” Presumably this is meant to refer to shops which are more commonly referred to as “private.” “Public,” one can understand, but “private,” rightly or wrongly, carries a connotation of “for the benefit of” someone or something other than public. Hence NAC’s euphemistic skill comes to the fore, and we have the substitution of “voluntary” shop for “private” shop.)

NAC’s definition employs the field’s standard rhetoric. Shops are designed for those who are “unable to meet the requirements of regular competitive employment.” If NAC had stopped there, one could have only minimal quarrel with its definition of the purpose of the sheltered shop. But NAC also envisions the sheltered shop as a fitting place for the blind person who *is* competitively employable, but for whom “such employment is not available.” One cannot help but wonder if “such employment is not available” because as in Kettner’s case and in the Sterner Company’s words, “no one ever asked before.” No, NAC’s definition of the sheltered shop makes it far too easy for the lazy agency to use the shop as a convenient dumping ground. After all, a status 26 closure (Federal rehab jargon) is a status 26—that is, the state rehabilitation agency gets the same Federal credit (“status 26: closed employed”) for a placement in the sheltered shop as for the best imaginable job in private industry. The state agency gets credit; the Federal statistics get credit; the sheltered shop gets credit; and only the blind worker gets shortchanged and left out in the cold—often at less than the minimum wage.

NAC officials would like to have it generally believed that NAC standards require sheltered shops to pay the Federal minimum wage. Indeed, on numerous occasions their public statements have attempted to leave this implication:

Direct question to Alexander Handel on the floor of the 1971 National Federation of the Blind Convention: There is no requirement of NAC standards, is there Mr. Handel, that you have to have minimum wage?

Mr. Handel: You have to conform to the Federal Minimum Wage and Hour Law.

Question: Are you saying that NAC will not accredit or will withdraw accreditation from any sheltered workshop which doesn’t pay its blind workers a minimum wage?

Mr. Handel: You *didn’t* understand me correctly. I said that the standards do call for conformance with the wage and hour law.

Former NAC President, Peter Salmon, also found it distasteful to admit that NAC does not require minimum wage payment. His evasion technique was to quote out of context the COMSTAC *Report*, page 296, Standard 2.10: “The workshop pays wage rates commensurate with those paid for similar types and amounts of work by local commercial and industrial establishments maintaining approved labor standards.”

He naturally omitted any reference to Standard 2.9.1 which makes it clear that payment of wages *below* the minimum wage is specifically approved: “Where applicable, the workshop has certificates, from the Wage and Hours Division, U.S. Department of Labor, and from the appropriate state agency authorizing client wages less than the statutory minimum.”

In other words, when the whole of what NAC says about workshop wages is

examined in context, it is seen that NAC does not prohibit payment of sub-minimum wages. It merely requires a certain amount of paper work before sub-minimum payment is allowed.

To NAC's credit, however, it must be pointed out that Standards 2.10 through 2.10.6 at least attempt (if somewhat vaguely) to require the shop to make an honest, good faith effort to determine the worker's productivity in comparison to similar types of work performed in non-sheltered situations. In view of NAC's dubious ethical behavior in so many instances and in view of the widespread reports of workshop abuse of wage rate exemption procedures, the question must be raised as to whether Standards 2.10 through 2.10.6 and their application deal so inadequately with the problem because of sheer ineptness on the part of the Standard writers and applicers or whether there was, indeed, a conscious attempt to leave loopholes.

In any case, the Minneapolis Society's behavior is in clear violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act and in violation of NAC's public statements that it requires adherence to the provisions of that Act. NAC has repeatedly asked for documentation of complaints against its procedures and against its accredited agencies. It has chosen to ignore voluminous documentation presented it. Naturally NAC does not admit that it ignores such documentation. Rather, it uses the curious device of redefining the word "documentation" to meet its own narrow specifications. Here, however, is documentation that NAC must face. It cannot redefine Lawrence Kettner out of existence. Nor can it continue to accredit the Minneapolis Society for the Blind with

exposing itself for all the world to see as the shoddy farce which it is.

Who is Lawrence Kettner? He is only one of the thousands of blind human beings done daily damage by NAC's terrible irresponsibility. Listen well, NAC. For though you have never before heard of Lawrence Kettner, you will hear of him many times in the future. You will hear of him until you cease to be the front which makes such exploitation possible.

Lawrence Kettner owns his own farm near Chaska, Minnesota (about thirty miles from Minneapolis). He applied for assistance from Minnesota Services for the Blind in 1971. It was his desire to continue farming. However, he was told by the Agency that the State could not support a farm program. Minnesota Services for the Blind played an instrumental role in negotiating the lease under which Mr. Kettner's farm is now operated. Because of income from this lease Mr. Kettner was required to pay certain rehabilitation costs.

In 1972 Minnesota Services for the Blind sent Mr. Kettner to the Minneapolis Society for the Blind's Occupational Treatment and Training Program. Subsequent to this so-called O.T. & T., Mr. Kettner had some short-term jobs in private industry. In connection with these jobs, he was told by Agency officials not to indicate to his employers that he was blind—that is, to pretend that he was sighted.

In December of 1973 Minnesota Services for the Blind sent Mr. Kettner back to the Society's O.T. & T. program. On January 7, 1974, Mr. Kettner began a period of evaluation preparatory to becoming an employee of the Society's sheltered workshop. It is during this training and

evaluation period that an employee's productivity for purposes of minimum wage exemption is established. Mr. Kettner's evaluation period began on January 7, 1974, and ended on January 25, 1974. No record is shown of January 12. The period, therefore, contained fourteen days. Analysis of Mr. Kettner's production record (the Society's official document substantiating Mr. Kettner's substandard performance for purposes of minimum wage exemption) shows the following facts:

1. The first time study was performed after only five and one-half hours of experience, lasted one and one-quarter hours, and showed a productivity rate of forty-two to fifty-two percent.
2. The first time study had come at the close of a day. The second time study began first thing the following morning. Thus, at the beginning of the second time study, total experience was six and three-quarters hours. The second study lasted four and one-half hours and showed a productivity rate of fifty-one to sixty-three percent.
3. The third time study was performed after twenty-three and three-quarters hours experience, lasted three hours, and showed a productivity rate of sixty-two to seventy-seven percent.
4. The fourth and final time study was performed after forty hours of experience, lasted six hours, and showed a productivity rate of seventy-nine percent.
5. The total hours of experience given are for experience on a variety of jobs—rather than being hours of experience at the particular job being timed.
6. The four time studies came on the third, fourth, sixth, and eighth days of training. No time studies at all were performed during the final days when it would be expected that

productivity would be at its highest. Indeed, Mr. Kettner's productivity rate rose steadily with each succeeding time study: forty-two to fifty-two percent, then fifty-one to sixty-three percent, then sixty-two to seventy-seven percent, and finally seventy-nine percent. One can hardly help but wonder why, in view of the steady improvement, the rate studies were suddenly terminated when Mr. Kettner reached a seventy-nine percent productivity rate even though there were six days remaining in the evaluation period. Unless, that is, the object of the evaluation is to try to insure that as few workers as possible reach standard production rates. Then, of course, the reason for the sudden termination becomes distastefully clear. In fact, even with the stacked deck, one wonders what justification can be claimed for setting the productivity level at seventy-five percent when the last time study showed seventy-nine percent and climbing.

Mr. Kettner reports three additional facts which should be noted:

1. The standard output per hour is based on the output of sighted factory workers operating machinery in good working order. For example, the fish fillet board job requires a certain punching operation. The Society's equipment is broken. Thus Mr. Kettner was required to perform the punching operation by hand. Even so, his performance was measured against the standard established by the worker using the machine doing the punching.
2. During the time study period Mr. Kettner frequently ran out of materials. He often sat for nearly an hour waiting for materials. This waiting time was included in determining his piece rate.
3. During the time study period Mr. Kettner was subjected to the harassment of sighted employees and supervisors standing behind him saying "faster, faster." The work area was messy and disorganized.

Mr. Kettner's official evaluation period

ended on January 25, 1974. The minimum wage payment is apparently not required during evaluation. During the evaluation period Mr. Kettner was paid from \$.83 to \$1.57 per hour. For the period January 28 through February 1, the production record carries the notation, "We just kept him on until he could get placed." Thus during this period he was no longer in evaluation and training but actually doing regular work. He was paid from \$.90 to \$1.24 per hour. It hardly seems necessary to comment upon the ethics of such behavior, not to mention its implications with respect to the spirit (and, perhaps, the letter) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Based on the Society's production record, Mr. Kettner was pressured by Society officials (including Executive Director, Jesse Rosten) to sign a minimum wage waiver form indicating that he was capable of only seventy-five percent of normal production at \$1.35 per hour from February 4 (his first official day in the shop) until he actually signed it on February 11. On the day of the actual signing he was badgered in the main office from before nine a.m. until noon. He finally signed because he was told he would sign or be fired. Because of worry over financial obligations due that week he caved in and signed.

Minneapolis Society officials were unaware on February 11 (while they were insisting that they could document and therefore that Mr. Kettner must admit that he could only do substandard work) that he had, on February 8, been hired by Sterner Lighting Company at \$2.17 per hour. The Sterner job was not to commence until February 18, with payday coming still later, but Mr. Kettner's financial obligations were immediate; and

he was being threatened with firing, a bad record, and the possible loss of what he had already earned. As a matter of fact, he did not receive pay from the Society for his final days of work until well into March, after an attorney contacted the Society in his behalf.

The Minneapolis Society does contract work for Sterner Lighting. Presumably Sterner farms out its simpler jobs to the blind. The Sterner Company, when approached by Mr. Kettner and a representative of the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota (Mrs. Sharon Grostephan) said something to this effect (the words are a paraphrase and not an exact quote): "We've never been asked to hire a blind person before. We guess if they can do our work there (the Society), why not here? But no one has ever asked before."

Mr. Kettner has since received a raise to \$2.25 per hour. The Sterner Company apparently does not regard Mr. Kettner's work as substandard.

Consider the behavior of the officials of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind toward Lawrence Kettner in a broader context. For instance, review the articles concerning the Society which appeared in the *Minneapolis Daily American* in mid-1972. The headlines themselves are revealing: "Charity Group Refuses to Talk"; "Blind Are Being Kept in the Dark"; "President of Non-Profit Blind Society Given Whopping Contract." In its June 2, 1972, edition *The Daily American* reported as follows:

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind has refused to answer questions regarding bids on a federally assisted construction project.

The questions arose when *The Daily American* learned that Richard Johnstone, president of the Society, also is president of the South Side Plumbing and Heating Company, which has the mechanical contract on the project.

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind—a United Fund agency, is a charitable organization chartered by the State of Minnesota as a non-profit corporation.

It receives funds from the Hennepin County Welfare Board, the State of Minnesota, the Federal Government, and the United Fund, as well as other private donations.

The Society is constructing an addition to its workshop at 1936 Lyndale Avenue, S. The total cost of the project could not be obtained from the Society.

Frank Johnson, executive director of the Society, told *The Daily American* that the building would cost “about \$800,000.” However, he would not divulge details of the contracts or of the bidding.

Frank A. Church, a U.S. official in the Chicago office of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare said that “special problems” are raised if a member of the board bids on such a contract.

“Bids are always supposed to be open and competitive,” he said. “In cases like this, the board should take special efforts to make sure that the bidding is open and competitive, and that the bids are opened in an open meeting.”

Johnson said that the bids were opened “late in October” of last year. He said that the board of directors did not open bids, but “delegated that responsibility to the building committee.”

Johnstone, whose firm got the mechanical contract, is chairman of that building committee as well as president of the Society for the Blind.

Johnson refused to tell *The Daily American* where and when the bids were opened, or if the meeting was open. He hung up the telephone when the reporter persisted in asking for more information.

So reported the newspaper, but there is no evidence that NAC took notice. The workshop is expanded; its president gets a whopping contract to do the work; and the workers get less than the minimum wage. And NAC accredits and calls it quality.

NAC, you have said you want documentation. Here it is—in great detail. It can be summarized in two words: *Lawrence Kettner*. So what will you do about it? Do you wish to deny that you were aware of the newspaper articles? You can't. They appeared prominently in the October 1972 *Braille Monitor*. Do you wish to deny that you are aware of what appears in *The Monitor*? Nobody would believe it. Would you like to take us to court on the grounds that we have not told the truth? Come and do it! Will you try to explain it away? Pretend it never happened? Ignore it? Or, will you revoke the accreditation of the Minneapolis Society? The blind of the Nation are waiting—and so are the members of Congress and the responsible agencies in the field. What will you do, NAC? Come up to the line and show us. □

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE BLIND: A LOOK AHEAD

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CONSUMERISM

BY

FRANK KURT CYLKE

Editor's Note.—Mr. Cylke is Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress.

I was enthusiastic when Mr. Jernigan phoned and asked that I participate—he followed that up with a letter—and I'll tell you why. I project for the service for the blind and physically handicapped a very bright future. And I would anticipate—well, actually it's already true—that in my stay here through Thursday, that you, individually and collectively, will have a great deal to contribute to the program, both directly and indirectly.

Now today I'll deal primarily with six specific areas. First, I will overview the program for you very, very briefly; then touch upon our disc and cassette program; say a few words about the multi-state center enterprise, which we have just entered into this fiscal year—the last week or two of the fiscal year, as a matter of fact; talk about our automation activities; talk about our position relative to Braille, and I understand that many of you have serious questions here; and finally, talk to the point of the relationship of both the organized consumer and the individual consumer to the Division—specifically, of course, to the Library of Congress. Well, all that seems like a great deal of time, but I promise that most of the time will be the questions and answers.

For the overview: A very popular and well-accepted public service like the Library of Congress program for the blind

and physically handicapped usually supplies most of its own momentum for increase in growth. But growth alone does not necessarily insure the best program for the resources invested in it, and I'm sure you're all agreed with that. The continued renewal and the sound operation of even the best public service requires long-range planning based on experience from the past, the best data available regarding present operations, and the best projections that can be made about the future. Several factors made a major stock-taking and planning on a long-range basis doubly important today. The first is the growth that we are actually experiencing. Now the program observed its forty-third anniversary on March 3 of this year. It showed growth from a very modest service of books in Braille for a very small number of readers circulated through nineteen cooperating libraries, to growth of a national network of over 125 libraries serving nearly a half-million readers. (You'll excuse the poetic license here—399,000 actually.) Now the growth that we have experienced has been at the rate in excess of ten percent for the last few years. And as far as the circulation of actual items—cassettes, talking books, magazines, and Braille books—we actually have doubled this in five years, from 5.3 million items to nearly ten million items. It's expansive, and you can see that the service is growing. Most of the expansion in recent years can be traced to two specific events, two specific laws, which came into being: the first, which expanded the service from serving the blind to those who could not

read print for other reasons than legal blindness; and the other, the Library Services and Construction Act, which also for the first time made Federal funds available to state library agencies and state agencies for the blind for purposes of establishing or improving library services to the blind and handicapped persons under approved plans.

Well, I think enough of the overview. But let me just talk for a moment—before I get to the specific other five points that I mentioned—about where we will be going in the immediate future with the monies made available from Congress. It may interest you to know, if you haven't heard yet, again this year both the House and the Senate made available to us the money that we requested. This puts our program slightly over eleven million dollars [applause] for the total program. And I would like to say to you that while this eleven million dollars might seem like a great deal of money, it is not near the amount that is required, that we would like to be proud of, and that would bring you library service that would approach that available to the sighted community.

With that money and with the money, hopefully more and more, that will become available in the years to come, we're going to act in these basic priority areas: one, to meet sound reproducer needs. I'm sure many of you are aware of the problems we are having as a result of the petroleum problem and the electronic component shortage, the delivery of machines to distribute—so that will be our first effort. Second is to alleviate the book shortage problem through the actual provision of more titles and more copies. Three—and I don't mean that these should be considered as the top priority items in a one, two,

three area because when I get to the next, which is the restructuring of our Braille position, and taking into consideration here existing and projected technologies which haven't been applied to Braille, I mean that this will be a first priority area—we would like to expand the use of volunteers, expand our network participation and the sophistication of which the library system is receiving through the regional library program, and seek out more readers. When you think that we have 390,000 or 400,000 readers—that sounds like there are many, and it is—but no matter whose estimates you use of how many blind or physically handicapped, you know that's but a small percentage. And our feeling is that we should make a much greater effort in attracting potential users to the program.

I'm very sympathetic to Mr. Jernigan's comment of putting the Federation literature at the county fairs—putting it into places where it can come into the hands of potential users, those who can tell potential users about it—and we'll certainly be working in this area ourselves. And then finally, and just perhaps an integral part of everything else, provide an appropriate administrative support program within the Library of Congress to carry on these efforts.

Now for discs and cassettes—well, what are we going to do with discs and cassettes? We recently brought into our program a corporation called QEI from Bedford, Massachusetts, and they made what we call, and I quote, "A Study of Decision Factors and Planning the DBPH Audio Services." The report addressed the problems concerned with the planning for future operations of the various listening devices that we have. And they made several recommendations. I have ten of these

recommendations here. When I read them please understand that I'm not suggesting that we're going to act in every case, but this is the range of considerations we're giving to the problems of the flexible disc, the hard disc, and the cassette machine. One, they suggested that we adopt the use of cassettes only for circulation book material; that for magazines and news material we should continue to use the flexible discs, but only do that on a direct circulation basis. This means that if we adopted this, that within a period of time we would one hundred percent distribute books on cassettes and one hundred percent put our magazines on flexible discs. Now again I stress that this is a recommendation that's been made and not a final decision yet. They suggest that we plan this phase-out of the hard disc for our books over a ten-year period, and that we continue the talking record book circulation and the talking book machine maintenance only if it's required to meet the needs of the present talking book users. In other words again, what they're talking about is making the cassette the background of the program. They suggested as a third point that we continue with the issuing of talking book machines as planned for the current fiscal year, but to plan no production after the fiscal year 1975. They suggested that we adopt a four-track $1\frac{5}{16}$ cassette as our standard, and they also suggested that we do consider the use of a combination machine—a machine which would indeed be able to play records and cassettes on the same, hopefully handy, sturdy, and yet portable machine. [Applause] In this particular area—I'm particularly delighted to hear that applause because just last Friday, which was the close of our fiscal year, we have awarded a development contract—this does not mean—again I do not want you to

think we are definitely going in this direction—but we have awarded a design or development contract for the development of such a machine. What the people are going to do for us, specifically the Waters-Connally Company, is to design two machines. One would be a plug-in unit—in other words, a small turntable that would be able to be plugged in to any available commercial cassette machine, and obviously, specifically the ones we produce; and the other would be in one case a combination machine which would play the $8\frac{1}{3}$ record and the $1\frac{5}{16}$ four-track as well as the $1\frac{7}{8}$ two-track. It's a development contract that's just been awarded, but some of the dimensions might interest you. Already we're talking about a machine that would be no thicker than five inches—that's in height. It would be approximately twelve inches wide and eighteen inches long; it would have a low center of gravity; it would be a handy, useful machine. Now it's premature to say that this is the machine you'll find coming out, but we are working in this area. [Applause] The QEI Company also indicated that we should take all steps to expedite the issuance of more cassette playback machines as soon as possible, obviously to meet the current backlog—and we certainly know that they're there, and we have also taken some steps to do this. I believe the machine you'll see coming out in approximately twelve months, which will be under manufacture from the General Electric Corporation as our machine one-generation-removed, will be very interesting. It will have some features incorporated in it which were not incorporated in earlier machines. For example, the operating keys will be spaced; again a return to the raised directional signal; perhaps a color coding, and so forth—but all based again on hopefully far

more consideration from you as organized and as individual consumers. Now they also indicated that we should have a more intensive program of quality control, both on the medium and the machines—and I'll vouch for that myself. And we are definitely bringing this person on. You'll find that in the money that was made available to us again by Congress for this coming year's operation has included the establishment of a specific position for a quality control engineer. So he will be on board, and hopefully will be able to help us a great deal in upgrading the quality of the products that you will receive.

Now, what new activities are we involving ourselves in? As I said, there are two things: one is a multi-state center, and the second is an automation effort. Just a few points—you are all aware that there is no one source you can go to for information concerning all the books reproduced in the Library of Congress or all of the books available throughout the world produced by volunteers in various states around the country—and there should be. We have brought on an individual who has worked very successfully in the Federal environment, in the computer world, who has done this for the Environmental Protection Agency. I'll mention his name here—his name is Morton Friedman. He ran the Cincinnati, Ohio, library for the EPA. He is already directing himself to the creation of such a tool. What we would like to think would come about within a few years—say three years, no more than five—will be immediate access for you the consumer, directly and through your libraries, of information on all books which are available to you—the same type of information available to the sighted person now through such tools as the National Union Catalogue. This would be the

development of a National Union Catalogue for the blind and physically handicapped community. [Applause] The reason I mention Morton Friedman's name . . . is that we're more or less putting our reputations on the line for this. And I would say wait three, no more than five years for this, and if it's not there, then it would be time for us to take some drastic personal action (and you can see I'm not too worried about it not being there, or I wouldn't say that in public).

All right, the next new thing on the agenda is the multi-state center. There have been some problems with logistics and storage problems in serving a library network from a central place in Washington. So we have established currently two—again in this past fiscal year, and may indeed expand—multi-state centers to several things: (1) to house and lend materials which are available from the national program—hopefully they will be able to get it to the regional libraries in a much quicker way; (2) to act as a focal point for volunteer production of materials in the area—not to actually produce, but to aid, assist, produce necessary technical information, and in some cases the actual materials; (3) to maintain and circulate special collections of lesser used materials, including back issues of magazines, cassettes, Braille books selected for national collection programs, and books produced by volunteers in this area. So hopefully we'll be bringing together—so regional libraries, again, for you, will be able to get materials much more quickly and much more effectively. Also they would store and lend sound reproducers and related equipment, and furnish replacement parts. The time lag, for example, in getting a replacement piece from Washington to California could be cut

down because in the particular case of California a multi-state center is in the State of Utah. And they would also house and ship nationally produced promotional materials and brochures and catalogues—and this refers back to our effort of getting direct contact both with users and with those people who can refer the service to users.

Now Braille—in no other area is the development of new policies more critical than in Braille. Technology in the production of Braille has not kept pace with the other technologies impinging on the library program. We know this, you know this. The unit cost for a Braille title is disproportionately high and probably will go even higher. In the last year, the increase has been in the area of Braille twenty-six percent. So when you think, for example, of the increase in the cost of living that affects you and me—whether you take the Office of the President's six percent or the ten percent that others mention or even higher estimates—it doesn't approach twenty-six percent, and that's what our real cost is. In addition to that, we have the significant problem of acquiring the Braille paper. Well, I'm not going to go into the values of Braille, the advantages of Braille, and the need to definitely continue Braille. [Loud applause] But I would like to say that our interests can be identified in several ways: one—and this individual is here at the Convention—Dick Evenson, who is my special assistant, has as his first concern an examination of the whole Braille area. He was the project monitor, the instigator, the initiator of a program to survey our actual Braille users. And we have done this—as to your likes, your dislikes, where you would like to see us moving in, and so forth. He has, with Morton Friedman, talked to the point of

developing more computer applications in the area of Braille. For the first time, as a matter of fact, we have a print trainer coming for the Library of Congress' computer to experiment there to hopefully speed things up, and he will be undertaking, if the funds become available—and we have every reason to believe they will be—a major look at the whole Braille reading community that does not use our services. In other words, only ten percent of our readers read in Braille, and yet we know there's a significantly greater number of people in the community who use Braille. The question to us is, why not? Are we not providing what you want? All right, that's a legitimate point, so we have to find out who isn't using us and what type of things you indeed want, and that is what Dick will be spending a great portion of his time doing. I mention his name again because you can find him in the exhibit hall at the Library of Congress exhibit through the rest of this week—through Thursday at least.

We are down to consumer participation. This is, of course, a particularly appropriate topic for a group of consumers—the largest group of consumers that we have. [Applause] I gave considerable thought to writing these next three pages. Bear with me for a minute and I'll read them. In that way there should be no confusion about what I have to say in the area of consumer participation.

The Library of Congress wishes to involve all blind and handicapped consumers as much as possible in all matters. The Librarian, indeed, has encouraged the Division—encouraged me personally—to solicit views from both organized and individual consumers. And I believe, as an

aside that we are beginning to do this more and more—that this has been demonstrated. The largest group of the organized blind, the Federation, has been intimately involved in the decision-making process. Do not misunderstand, however. I do not mean that you have been involved in actually making the decisions—that is not appropriate—but rather as a source of vital input upon which these decisions were made. Now let me give you a few examples of these. I listed the first five that came to mind: The objectionable comments which were related to the handling of discs and tapes were removed at the suggestion of your President. [Applause] Again bear in mind that you're going to continue to hear this from time to time because we cannot eliminate all the references in the past—but we no longer do it. So over a period of time they'll all be gone—but we have indeed stopped it. A draft book selection policy was developed; and Peggy Pinder, who served as your representative, and Florence Grannis, whom you know, made suggestions there to the actual book selection policy on which we would base an acquisitions policy and on which we would select books. If there's anything important it's the actual selection of the titles. When we only have a limited amount of dollars; when it is only possible for us with the money that we have to purchase one thousand titles a year; and when there are approximately forty thousand titles available to the sighted community each year, you begin to get a picture of how important that really is. Again, as I said, we solicited Peggy and Florence's input here. Florence Grannis suggested that we issue what we call joint book lists, and we will begin to do this based on the very good issuances of the book lists by the Iowa Commission. I pointed out earlier the QEI study concerning the cassette input; both Mr. Jernigan and Mrs. Grannis, again, were solicited for their input. And perhaps very important, the National Commission on Information and Library Science revised

their position relative to library service to the blind, and will come out with a statement which is a very positive one concerning the need for the increase in service—primarily due to the very prompt and effective communication that Mr. Jernigan had with them. This will be made public in a few days, and I'm sure that you will appreciate that action. [Applause] So I would say that it is our plan definitely to solicit and to utilize consumer group input. We will solicit it; but at the same time, please know that you are free to contribute at any point; and we will definitely listen, and in most cases, hopefully, we will be able to develop a program that will meet your needs.

Now in conclusion, three basic points: one, the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will strive to provide service of a very high quality to all qualified individuals; two, very hard work will be expended on developing new funding approaches and in assisting the regional libraries in refining their procedures and routines and exploring new service configurations which, hopefully, will assist and develop the program to an even finer degree; three, we will work to develop cooperative planning that all libraries will be able to assume on a fairly even basis, so that your service will not vary much from from state to state, and so that you can get quality service wherever you go. As I said before—and the reason I'm repeating it is because I want it to be loud and clear—that we will seek and that we will heed, whether it is solicited or whether it comes in gratuitously, input from you as individuals or from you as a group, the National Federation of the Blind. Thank you very much. [Much applause]

"IT'S GOOD, CONSIDERING. . ."

BY

FLORENCE GRANNIS

There's no library for the blind which can, without qualification, unequivocally, be called good. When somebody says of *our* library, the library of the Iowa Commission, "It's good, considering it's only fourteen years old," I have a few twinges because I know that it will not be unqualifiedly good during my lifetime. Incidentally, the surveyor of any library for the blind may not say, "It's good, considering . . ." He may not even think it. That's the most dismaying aspect of all. His attitude that, of course, service for the blind cannot be measured by criteria applicable to other similar services, is so deeply rooted, so well-nigh subconscious, that he doesn't know it exists. And if it were pointed out to him, he would say, "Well, after all, one must be reasonable."

Looking at some of the libraries for the blind, what qualifications might be appropriate? It's good, considering that the administrators never have given us enough importance to employ adequate staff or provide sufficient space. It's good, considering that the person in charge felt blind people should be protected from books dealing with sex and violence. [Laughter] It's good, considering that the head of it knows virtually nothing about books and has a regressive philosophy about handing them out—"Send back the book you have before you may have another." It's good, considering the staff overwhelmingly viewed blind people as second-class citizens and, therefore, believed and manifested that it didn't much matter which books they had or the sort of access they had to them. No Bodleian

Library for blind people, no Princeton, Harvard, Yale. If we were to combine all the libraries for the blind in the world title-wise, we would not have a good meal for a self-respecting bookworm. [Laughter and applause]

I grew up in a large city with a good library—a million books. I loved it; I was an avid reader. I'd go into the library—a huge old building—and it was far from the kid and goodie factory—I would sample a book on Greek mythology. Apollo and his lyre led me to read about stringed instruments, which led me to read about great violinists and composers, and so on. Richard Wright, a famous black writer, in one of his books, mentions the segregated library, which was all he had access to. He read the first book on the shelf, then the second, and the third until he had read them all—and it didn't take all that long either. When I became interested in my city's library for the blind, I found that many of its borrowers had read the entire collection and waited for new books to be issued—sometimes quite a long time, too. Just think what that meant: it wasn't that these people had read everything in their particular subject area. No, they had read *The Hide and the Hoof*, *Seventy Miles from a Lemon*, *The Coming Age of Wood*, and *The Egoist*. That library for the blind—an inadequate book stock was only one of its problems. It was inadequately staffed, poorly housed, poorly financed, was part of the city system which gave me and the other sighted readers the million-volume treasure. The administrators of that library were confident, intelligent, service-oriented

people. They thought, when they thought about it at all—which was very infrequently—"The poor blind. It's a pity, but they really can't make much use out of books anyway. There are plenty of religious organizations to take care of their needs. We give to these. Let the blind read the Bible."

Now we have a new chief—a new era dawning. He had told you of some of the new things coming. Under his aegis, the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will look alive. Let us remember, though—library service, as all services, is a two-way street. It's no accident that not until black power became a reality that Richard Wright and his brothers had unsegregated libraries. Blind power can and should be used. It should be used supportively toward Mr. Cylke. [Applause] It can and should be used to upgrade each and every regional library. Let us help bring about a change in that phrase "It's good, considering . . ." so that the truth will be, "It's good!" Thank you. [Loud applause]

President JERNIGAN. The Chair has a question to put to Mr. Cylke, just a comment and then a question. Mr. Cylke, as you know I was concerned when you had a conference of consumers—I was concerned with the balance of representation. It sounds good to talk of getting the views of organized and unorganized consumers and giving equal weight to all sides. But that can also become the means of un-democracy. Let me show you what I mean. If you had a world conference that gave equal weight to the United States, the Soviet Union, Luxembourg, and an individual you picked from one of the South American countries,

there might be some complaint both from Russia and the U.S., maybe even from tiny Luxembourg. I am concerned that when unorganized consumers, especially those who have a chance to be a part of an organization, have equal weight with organized consumers—you see here before you the representatives; we are not just individuals speaking in concert here; but we are representatives, all of us, of large organizations back home—so we feel we can speak for the blind of this country. OK, now what am I getting at? There was a conference called, and equal weight was given at that conference to the representatives of this organization and the American Council for the Blind. If you believe these organizations are anything alike—in fact, I would urge you to find the time to go yourself, or send a representative, to the meeting of that organization later this month in Chicago—I invite you to view the contrast. The numbers are not there; the representation is not there. I told you at the time that I intended to make no issue out of that. You're a new man in the job, and beyond that you have been very cooperative with us. I recognize the diplomatic problems and I also recognize that the ACB, even though it be largely a paper organization, has a right, if it chooses, to some representation. We wouldn't deny that. But I am concerned if, in future relations, every time there is to be a representative voice of consumers—if regardless of the fact that one organization may be forty or fifty times as big as another, and therefore speak for that many more people—there is equality in the sense of numbers given to representation. And also I am concerned about whether the individual consumer is actually a representative of anybody but himself, so there may be an imbalance in that.

Now, I say all of that to you as a friend, and also as an individual—you, that is—as an individual who has demonstrated that you are thoughtful and concerned about the best interests of the program and wish to get a balance and have a fair viewpoint. I would appreciate having whatever response or comment you wish to make to that, if any.

Mr. CYLKE. I don't mean to play a game of semantics with you, but I think the words you used were "equal weight"; and I don't believe that that applies in the specific case that you are referring to—this was the book selection conference—or in the other cases. It is indeed true, and I mentioned it on the podium today, that we would listen to groups of organized consumers, both the organized blind and the organized physically handicapped, and that we would listen to individuals. Obviously, there's a difference in weight. If you're speaking for the largest group—and I believe I pointed out, acknowledged the fact, that I was aware of the fact that the Federation of the Blind is the largest group of organized blind—we would certainly give a significant amount of attention to that point and it would weigh heavier than it would from a single suggestion from a single individual, unless we validated it through a significant questioning, direct sampling, or checking with you. In the five points that I mentioned where we had specifically taken in consumer suggestion—for one, the objectionable comments relating to the handling of discs and cassettes—I took that suggestion from you as a representative of the organized blind, the largest group of the organized blind, and we acted on that as a significant piece of our consumer universe—and there was no validation or checking on that point. The same with the joint book lists,

the same with the national commission. It is indeed true that in the same room, at the same time, there were representatives of other groups, and there were some individuals. But I assure you that it was not a synthesis or a watering down or an attempt to balance one organization against another; that the attention was paid to the fact that the Federation does represent the largest group of the organized blind; and we would like to act in that way. [Applause] I cannot give you a formula, but I can assure you that that would be the case. Again, as I mentioned in my presentation, we solicit comments and we also welcome comments that are unsolicited; so that at any point in time, when you or any state group or any segment of the Federation feels that we haven't been paying attention in an appropriate way, I'd say bring it to our attention and we definitely will.

We have not produced enough in the area of Braille. I can't speak as to whether a specific book was on or not on the shelves, but part of our problem is that ten percent of our readers read Braille and ten percent of our budget is for Braille. In other words, we spent over one million dollars a year on the production of Braille alone, and with the increase in costs of twenty-six percent last year, we're spending twenty-six percent less this year. And unless we can get more money or develop the technologies appropriately to bring down the cost, we're in one serious bind. Now we're addressing ourselves to (1) increasing our budget and (2) a very serious amount of work in the technological aspect.

President JERNIGAN. Mr. Cylke, let me give you a piece of information, and also this audience—I forgot to do this earlier. I

think this can be a significant breakthrough. One of the problems in producing Braille has been the stereotyper or stereograph machine—it has been largely unavailable. You can try to buy such a machine—and the American Printing House once in a while either makes or alleges to make those machines—but you can never seem to buy one. So I put some of your money as Federationists into a development program to try to come up with a machine which we are now going to call the Braille-o-graph. The Braille-o-graph has some distinct advantages. The first machine is going to cost us in excess of eight thousand dollars, but that's only because it's a prototype. The old stereotyper, as you know has six keys, like a Braillewriter; then you hit those keys in combination, just as you would a Braillewriter; and then it punches it out on a metal plate; Then this plate is put on a press. We have combined some electronics expertise—we have some mechanical expertise—and I am promised that we will have a working model by November 1. Now I have put, so far, three or four hundred dollars of your money into it and have an agreement with the manufacturer that if they don't give me a working machine, the kind I'm about to describe to you, they'll get no more. So we'll get a machine or we won't spend the money, except for the original design and work—they've agreed to that.

This machine would operate in this manner: In the first place, you would use a regular Perkins Braillewriter. That Perkins Braillewriter would have it's six keys geared to combinations of the kind of tones that are used for touch-tone telephone dialing, and it would make a cassette tape. When you get to the end of the line, put a hyphen in if you need it; come back to the

next line. All of that would be recorded on the cassette tape by touch-tone, showing what had happened. Now, it would only cost from thirty-five to forty dollars to modify a Perkins Brailier so that you could write in this manner. Then, you take that cassette and feed it into the Braille-o-graph. The Braille-o-graph, operating from this tape, would be able to produce at a minimum of three hundred words a minute and a maximum of nine hundred words a minute on metal plates. And it would know when to come back and make a new line and all the rest by what you had done on the Perkins Brailier. It carries in it's memory two lines at the same time. One of the great disadvantages of the current stereotyper machine is that when you go down to the end of the line, you've got to throw that carriage back and start again. This way, when you go down the line it is also taking into it's memory what's on the line below it. When you get to the end of that line, it's got it in it's memory and it plays backwards as you come back to the next line. So it comes down and back, down and back—cuts down the time a lot.

There are other advantages to this. The people who are electronics experts—and also the mechanical experts—tell me that any stereotyper they've seen in this country—we've had them do some study on them—are straight out of the nineteenth century in engineering. There are just better ways to do it. They tell me that when we get this first model, then the next model will come down to five thousand dollars, or thereabouts, and it is possible to get further price breaks. It is my intention, and our intention as a Federation, I think, to break the monopoly in Braille in this country. [Loud applause] You see what this would mean is that you could modify eight or ten Braillewriters for thirty-five or

forty-five dollars apiece; and one Braille-o-graph operating at from three to nine hundred words a minute could service them all; and you could pump out Braille plates left and right; and then put them on a regular press which we could get—the press is not the problem—and I think we could get Braille a lot cheaper and a lot more efficiently. And they tell me they'll have that by the latest in November for us—and if they don't have it, we won't spend any money on it. [Applause] I thought you might want to know this, Mr. Cylke, because we're going to try to get Braille cheaper in this country. [More applause]

Mr. Marcelino asked about a more thorough survey of Braille users and about the accessibility of a list of new publications so that blind consumers could participate in book selection.

Mr. CYLKE. I want to thank you very much. I think that you've raised two points: one, that you were not yourself surveyed—and that, of course, is quite possible. Our survey was selected from the readership of *The Braille Book Review*, as well as from the readership of *The Monitor*, as well as from the readership from other Braille magazines. There was not a hundred percent coverage. . . . The other point that you raised is a very good one. You do not have access to an awareness of what books are being produced—and your suggestion, at first cut, is reasonable. But at second cut, I think you'll find that we'll have to refine it a bit. I mentioned in my talk that there were approximately forty thousand titles issued every year in the English language in the United States, and it's just unwieldy. In other words, it would be great to do it, but it couldn't be done

collectively. It would be more than *The Monitor* and every other Braille magazine published in collective pages multiplied by—I don't know—a hundred. But there has to be an effort made to develop a more meaningful selection or acquisitions program involving consumer input. There is no question about that; that much we agree on.

President JERNIGAN. Mr. Cylke, what you could do, however—I would think—and this would be reasonable, seems to me—that once every quarter you could select from best sellers and others enough to make up a reasonably sizeable list. You could, since *The Monitor* reaches more than any other magazine in the field—you could, if possible, pay for the cost of brailleing one magazine-type volume which would go to our *Monitor* people—which would invite comment which of these, in the order of the first ten—which of these, if you could pick ten of them, would you like to see put into Braille. This might be a very good way to get some type of input. [Applause]

Mr. CYLKE. You've made a very good point, and obviously it's been ratified by the membership, so I'll take that one under consideration.

Mr. URENA. Mr. Chairman, here is Resolution 74-10 on this subject.

RESOLUTION 74-10

WHEREAS the members of the NFB believe that the blind of this country should receive the best possible governmental services through those programs designated to serve them including the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; and

WHEREAS the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, is responsible for providing literature and other reading materials to the blind; and

WHEREAS it is becoming increasingly apparent that Braille literature and reading materials provided by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, may be severely limited or reduced due to increased production and distribution costs; and

WHEREAS such a reduction of Braille services constitutes a serious infringement upon the rights of our Braille reading blind; and

WHEREAS the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is considering the practice of publishing Talking Book Topics in Braille; and

WHEREAS Mr. Frank Kurt Cylke, newly appointed Chief of the Division for the Blind and the Physically Handicapped, already has demonstrated his belief in providing top quality library services for the blind making it clear that he is sympathetic to our wants and needs; and

WHEREAS the new Chief has not had time to review all of the issues respecting the use of Braille: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 2nd day of July, 1974, in the City of Chicago, Illinois, that this organization strongly oppose the reduction or limitation of Braille

literature and reading materials provided for the blind by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NFB strongly urge the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to review its policy to the end that Talking Book Topics will again be produced in Braille; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the officers of this organization be instructed to work with the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, to ensure that the blind of this country will receive improved and expanded Braille services.

Mr. CYLKE. All right, I'd like to respond to that. I won't go into our budget process, but it involves three very significant steps: one is an internal Library of Congress review process; and then, of course, we appear before both the House and the Senate. I think this document would be a very useful one for use in all three, and if indeed it is the wish of the membership to pass it as is or modified, it would be very useful to me if we could get it before the 22nd of this month—

President JERNIGAN. We'll get you a copy before you leave if we pass it. [Great applause] Let me say something about the resolution. If we pass this resolution, it is, of course, incumbent upon us to help get the money to do what it asks to have done—the responsibility goes hand in hand with expectation of rights. I suspect the best thing we can do to help him in the Library of Congress—the internal structure—is probably to keep hands off.

But I think what we can do in the Congress is a good deal to help or hinder; and so if this resolution passes, it carries with it, as I understand it, the requirement that we work through our national representative in Washington—and also through our state and

local affiliates—and also individually—and try to get the budget so that we can do this. Anybody want to speak on this resolution, or do you want to vote on it? [The Resolution was adopted.] □

SSI: ONE YEAR LATER

BY

SUMNER WHITTIER

President JERNIGAN. You will remember that last year Mr. Sumner Whittier, who is Director of the Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled, came and talked with us. Mr. Whittier indicated at that time that he would listen to what we had to say when we wished to make representation to him, and indeed he has done so. He indicated that he would very much like to discuss programs with us on an ongoing basis; he has done so. He has now come back to talk to us on the topic: "SSI: One Year Later." I did not put him on the end of the morning session because I didn't want to rush this item. I think it's one of the most important items we have to deal with at this Convention. It is my pleasure to present to you, then, Mr. Sumner Whittier. [Applause]

Mr. WHITTIER. Thank you very much. Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: . . . I am delighted to be here. Last year when I came, you made my visit very warm and pleasant. I don't know of a more exciting group of men and women. It is absolutely appropriate for you to hold your meeting on the Fourth of July because you're all so explosive! [Loud applause] And I thought last year you had a big convention—and this year's appears to be bigger than ever! [Applause] Last year when I had lunch with Mr. Jernigan before we came

downstairs I asked, "How many states?" And he said forty-six and D.C. Now I understand Oklahoma has joined you and there are forty-seven and D.C. [Applause] And by 1975, fifty states and D.C.! [Applause]

I wouldn't be surprised if one or two of you had a few questions about SSI. [Laughter] Gee, not *everybody*?! So I brought my brains; and we do have a booth in the exhibition hall. Lisa Gooden is there—you notice we hire women—Lisa Gooden from the Chicago office is there. And Fred Crawford from South Carolina is there, who now works for me, and who, incidentally, is blind and a member of this organization. [Loud applause] And then you know Don Morrow of Ohio; he works for us too—is blind—and he's a member of this organization as well. Fifty thousand members across America—the voice of the blind! [Applause] I told you last year that if you called me to speak to you, if it were at all possible, I would come. I would not send a representative or aide; as Director of the Bureau, I would come personally out of respect for you and what you represent in this Nation. . . .

Last year from the floor of this great Convention, you asked me about an advisory group. You had passed, as I recall

it, a resolution which you read from the floor. I wouldn't be surprised if you had two or three resolutions this year to deal with SSI. I did tell you this, and you shouted your approval, that we would call upon you for advice; that whenever President Jernigan or your Washington representative or Mr. Taylor or your offices wanted to offer counsel or obtain help for the blind, we would be available at your request. You have, I said, a hot-line to my office and to the top people in the Department of Social Security. [Applause] That has worked better than you know. During the past year we have, as your President said, talked by telephone. And the results have been immensely rewarding to the blind of this Nation. It was important that we respond to you because of your strength and growth, as you were the outspoken champions of fine causes in behalf of the blind of America. [Applause]

Congress debated for four years before it passed this law, and there are many good things about it. There are some things we have to examine and change, but there is much that is done. Let me tell you one reason why: The amount of increase in total money for the aged, blind, and disabled in America in the last full year of the three adult programs—3.3 billion dollars was the total spent. In the first full year of this new program, 5.4 billions of dollars will go to the aged, blind, and disabled—an increase of two billion dollars for this important group. [Applause] And in the main, if you're eligible for Supplemental Security, you're eligible for Medicaid—I know I have a small problem with one blind couple in Tennessee, but they're getting more than they should—you get Medicaid as well in most states, and Medicaid is expected to increase by another

two billion dollars. That means a four billion dollar increase in benefits, cash payments, and Medicaid for the aged, blind, and disabled in America.

Now when we undertook to establish a supplemental security income, we knew it was a massive test. We knew there would be problems, and yet someone had to undertake that risk. This was the largest undertaking on the civilian side that the Federal Government had ever undertaken, according to the Secretary of HEW. We began with three million names transferred from state and county lists—thirteen hundred different administrative units; half of them didn't have computers. And that list of names has grown large since then. You simply cannot open as many new offices as Social Security did across the country, hire fifteen thousand people as we did, train them in complex new policies, and not discover that somewhere problems are going to turn up as surely as ants at a picnic. [Laughter]

Let me tell you of one important oversight that occurred in spite of all our good intentions, and what happened as a result—and it was the National Federation, it was your organization, who was first to discover the oversight. You discovered that if a blind person was sixty-five years old or over, and came down and applied for SSI, he or she could not file as a blind person. He had to file and receive benefits under the category of aged, even in those states where the blind were paid greater benefits than the aged. Many states, as you know, pay a supplement above the basic Federal floor amount, and some states in their supplement give more to the blind than they do to the aged. When SSI began in January, blind people could change from a blind category when they reached sixty-five

and could be registered and draw benefits as aged. But the aged who became blind and wanted to file a claim for or change to the blind category, could not register after age sixty-five and get the added benefits which several states wanted them to have. However, the law and policy did permit those who were receiving benefits in the blind category, if they were on the rolls, to continue. However, obviously, this policy, as it was enunciated in January, denied to the blind people the money they were entitled to under the laws of several of our states. I have an announcement to make to you here today, and you are the first to hear this—this is the first time this has been said anywhere—and will now go out from Washington—for you were the most concerned, and it was your vigilance, it was your President calling that initiated this important action: A change has been made just as you demanded it. [Loud applause] If you want to call this the National Federation of the Blind Amendment, if you want to call it the Jernigan Amendment, that's all right with me, because that would be a deserved and fitting name. [Applause] Now if you're over sixty-five and want to file for benefits for the blind because those benefits are higher in your state than the benefits are under the aged program, you will hereafter have that right. If you wish to change from the aged category to the blind because it means a larger benefit for it, you will henceforth have that privilege. Now we do ask one thing: that the states approve the change, since they pay the additional benefits in the state supplements. But I don't think that should be any problem, for they obviously expected you to have more because that's how they had voted to set up their programs. And believe me, if they didn't, with the power and the force of your group in that state, it wouldn't take them long to make up their minds to go along with it. [Applause]

Your President clearly pointed out to us

another important feature—that such failure to record the blind as blind was causing; that library and talking book services are needed by all blind persons most; and that the SSI program should identify the blind as blind—all applicants who are in fact blind regardless of age—and this change in policy will assist in correcting that difficulty as well. So we are attempting to be responsive to you.

But you also discovered something else as well—“Why, there's trouble in River City...” [Laughter] The names and records of people on the rolls we are using before January of this year are the ones we got from the state and county records. If the names and addresses and amounts were correct and in good shape, with all the proper information we had no problem—we'd send out the right amount. And that was so in many places. If, on the other hand, the names and amounts were not correct we had to correct them, and that has taken time. But in this conversion process we made a mistake. Did you ever hear anyone in the Federal Government admit that they made a mistake? [Laughter] I had to admit it—I'll tell you why. Somebody told me that they had a pot of tar boiling out here and some feathers... [Laughter] We made a mistake. What happened was this: In many states, when the benefit payments are figured for the blind, the states look at the other sources of income that a blind person has in order to compute how much his benefit should be—they count a certain income, and then they add an amount on the top. Many states believe that for the blind, a good portion of that income should be disregarded. Some of that other income should *not* be counted, because if it were, it would reduce the benefit payments for the blind too greatly—and in many

states, as you know, the disregarded amount for the blind is higher than for other disabled groups. The states did send us that information correctly—I don't want to blame all the problems on the states, because they have cooperated totally—they sent us the information. These individuals with a higher disregarded amount were sent to our computer rooms to be processed, and a bright young programmer discovered that the payments to the blind were higher and, in some instances, far higher than those listed for the other disabled categories. He thought someone had made a mistake, and he was going to correct them. It did not occur to him, for some reason, that that was the way the law had said it should be—that for all individuals converted from the states rolls, the program should adopt the same disregards for the blinded persons where those disregards were higher—and in those instances, the payment amounts for the blind *should* be higher, higher than they were for the other groups, he thought something must be wrong. And he took it upon himself to make the change he thought was a correct one. He thought he was doing a great, good thing. Without checking back with us, he adjusted the computers so that the blind would get the same amount that the state disregards allow for all the disabled. You discovered that before we did. You only had to open your check at the mailbox, and you found out. [Laughter] And when I said you had a hot line, you did—my office heard about it—you do have vigorous representation, believe me. [Much applause] What was that I heard Mr. Jernigan talk about this morning? Something about hell and confrontation, or something like that? I didn't know that hot line was going to be quite that hot! [Laughter] But anyway, in some instances, the amount was less than

you had been getting, and less than you had been promised. For the law said—and you had been told, for I told you last year—that you would receive no less under the new law than you got under the old one. As soon as we knew of the situation, we began correcting it. And I tell you firmly, your amounts either have been or will be made correct just as promptly as we can do it. Further, we have asked the states to check the proper amounts and disregards on every single case with us, so that we can figure every single penny that was reduced through this unfortunate circumstance. And any amounts that were reduced inadvertently will be paid in *full* retroactively back to the beginning of this year. [Drowned by applause] Not a penny properly due will be lost. I assure you that we are not going to let those computers make captives of the needy blind men and women of America. [Loud applause]

We never promised you a rose garden. What we did promise is that we would do our level best and that if there were problems we would do our very, very best to make prompt corrections. The law was designed so that the Federal Government would set up a basic payment, a floor on which to build: the states could add to it. So there could be basic fairness through the country up to a level of reasonable adequacy. They wanted to make sure that at least that basic amount paid was fair; whether you lived in the cotton belt in Alabama, whether you lived in the south or west side of this great city of Chicago, or in the rural villages of the plains. And the Federal Government should assume the responsibility for that basic amount and then the states can build on it. Now, how much is adequate? The original Federal base floor amount for a single individual with no other accountable income was

\$130—\$130 for a single, originally; couples \$195. And then the states, as they do in Massachusetts and New York and California, add on top of it. More than half of the states pay less than that: so in those states, an increase. Each state could tailor its benefit amount uniquely to the cost of living in that state. Obviously it costs more to live in some places than in others, although I don't know any these days where it's inexpensive. For most of the states, at their request, the Federal Government combines the Federal and state amounts—the Federal Government sends out the state check too, so that the recipient gets just one check.

The first law making Supplemental Security Income a reality, passed by Congress and signed by the President, was in October 1972. The problem was that even though \$130 for a single person may have appeared to be an adequate base in 1972, inflation kept marching. And if you have to live on a fixed income, inflation bites at you and chews at you and making ends meet is a tough, tough job. [Applause] In fact, it doesn't matter what income you have, inflation has made it more and more difficult to make ends meet. Thus, Congress told us in November 1973 it was going to increase the amount of the basic Federal benefit. As a result, a single person would get \$140 if he had no other income—a couple could get \$210 when the new program starts, that is if they had no other income. The Federal Government pays the difference between the other income and this floor. But inflation has continued, and so Congress added another further supplemental security increase. Two days ago, July 1, in the checks that went out, the basic Federal amount rose from \$140 to \$146 per month for a single person with no other countable

income [applause] and from \$210 to \$219 for couples without other income. Now, that's twice since the law's begun that Congress has increased it—the President has signed it.

But even with those increases, it seemed something even further had to be done. If you are receiving Social Security, not Supplemental, but Social Security, you know that they passed a year or so ago, a new cost of living clause. When the cost of living goes up three percent, Social Security will go up. But that is not true of Supplemental Security Income. Congress still has to vote any individual increase in SSI benefits. If a cost of living increase is necessary for Social Security recipients, why should not the needy aged, blind, and disabled have just such a cost of living increase? [Much applause] And although I have not seen your resolutions, I suspect in one of the resolutions that will come out of your resolutions committee—you will have just such a recommendation, because the costs keep going up. You should not have to request an increase from Congress every time the cost of living rises—it should be automatic. This is exactly what we have recommended for the Federal base amount. The President put the suggestion in his Budget Message. HEW and the Social Security Administration have recommended it. And I've talked to many Congressmen, and I feel that Congress will take favorable action on the recommendation, so there will be such an increase. Now remember, they apply only to the basic Federal amounts—the states vote the top amounts, especially if you live in some of the northern states.

Now I'd like to talk about food stamps. When the law was being designed, the White House Conference on Aging

particularly said people were embarrassed that when they had food stamps and went down to the counter of their local grocery, they were marked as welfare—and they preferred to have cash and be able to purchase what they wanted exactly like everyone else. And so an effort was made to cash out the food stamps. That happened in only six states; in the others it is still possible to get food stamps and Supplemental Security Income—you have to see what the value is. But that law was going to run out as of July 1, two days ago, because Congress was trying to work out a replacement. Now I can tell you that both the House and the Senate have voted to extend food stamps for all Supplemental Security Income people as of July 1, and the bill has been sent to the President in Russia along with a number of other things for him to sign. [Laughter] You know, that strikes me as kind of interesting that the President, in the middle of all those negotiations still has to have a package of bills and other business from the United States that he has to sign somewhere there or on the plane coming back. . . . But at any rate the law will continue. It will do two things: It will continue food stamps along with supplemental security—you apply for supplemental security in Iowa and Nebraska and up against the food stamp eligibility standards of income, you will be eligible—automatically eligible. But in New York, Massachusetts, California, where there was a cash out, there was a conflict and not everyone got the full amount—the amount of his basic income plus the full amount of the food stamps. Congress has passed an amendment that will make the full payment so that everyone will get the full amount—no one will lose any money—and that will be retroactive up to January 2. My, the things that are happening around July 1! The new

policy changes and the increases. So you hold your Convention at a most important time.

The law involves so many things—it is huge and complicated. And you can understand how there might have been problems in implementing this law in the first six months of transition. That's what we're in. There will come a time when we will look back and understand or admit at this period there would be problems, and by that time I trust, if you invite me back again, we can say it is running smoothly and thinking of even greater improvements. What we're doing is building a huge, fine new highway, but in order to do that we have to have a detour until the new highway is completed.

I have heard it said, and some of my people tell me, we have paid ninety-eight percent of the checks on time, and in the right amounts. The only trouble is that two percent of four million people is an awful lot of people. The key factor, remember, is that we are identifying the problems promptly, and you are playing an important part in that. You discover it; you call us; and the problems are being corrected. Every statistic, every figure, is better in July than it was in January. And even more importantly, every single month ahead will see improvements until we reach that high standard of service for which Social Security has been famous in the past and which you as citizens and taxpayers in America have an absolute right to demand of your government. [Applause] Now I realize that there are some problems institutionally; and we are going to correct that policy too. The Secretary hasn't approved it, but it's on its way to his desk—I checked it as of this morning knowing I was going to be here this

afternoon. There are vast gains for people covered by this program—far more total money being paid to more people; the average payment per claimant is higher; more people are entering the rolls; and more are eligible for Medicaid because they are receiving SSI benefits.

Now I'd like, in closing, to focus on another aspect of the law as it deals with blind persons. In the book *Hope Deferred: Public Welfare and the Blind*, Jacobus tenBroek and Floyd W. Matson traced the history of the various laws affecting blind persons—the attitudes and reasoning behind the laws. And I'd like to quote a paragraph if I may. tenBroek said:

The test of social thought and programming for the blind, in accordance with our thesis, is whether it meets or defers meeting these needs: whether it presupposes the normality and equality of persons who are blind or presumes their abnormality and inferiority; whether it recognizes both their right and competence to govern their own lives, or seeks to impose a protective custody and perpetuate a dependant status; whether it creates opportunity and encourages access to normal competitive pursuits, or erects artificial handicaps and arbitrary barriers. And, finally, whether it provides public services as the rights due to citizens or as the charity bounty due to wards and indigents. [p. 2]

This general concept that tenBroek writes about, these beliefs in the dignity and competence of blind persons, is clear and shining in the printed material of this National Federation. And I felt the emotional impact, the full impact of these beliefs when I heard the eloquent and soaring words of President Jernigan at your large and splendid Banquet a year ago—so I am pleased to attend the Banquet tonight.[Applause] He traced the history

of strong men and women who had achieved great victories, and who, just incidentally, happened to be blind. [Applause] This new Supplemental Security law must be tested against those principles. As the law is now being implemented, we must examine every line of it, look at every policy, scrutinize every administrative function. Do our people have the appropriate attitudes; do they know and understand state regulations and laws applying to the blind so that cooperation between state and Federal laws and employees works smoothly? And if we find working together state people, Federal people, and you out of the private sector, we find a change is necessary, then we must be up and at it working together to make those essential changes.

Let me review a few of the ways with you, in which the current SSI law incorporates, I believe, the beliefs and concepts you have enunciated. The program pays a cash benefit, and that benefit goes directly to the individual—not to a third party—but to the recipient himself in the belief that he is capable and competent to make the decision as to how to use his own money. [Applause] SSI benefits do not include services or goods—they are in the form of cash to the recipient to permit him or her to make the decision which goods or services he or she wishes to purchase with it.[Applause] Yet it also is apparent that if there is to be the dignity of decision, the amounts—both state and supplementary amounts—must be adequate to meet inflationary demands. And so, as I have told you, the law has responded to that need with a new cost-of-living recommendation. The removal of this program from welfare offices—and incidentally, I sat in this city—I went down to a welfare office and I

sat in the line to get through and see what it was like, and I went to a Social Security Office anonymously, and they didn't know who I was. I said my name was Phillip J. Budd; I said I was mentally disabled; and they approved me too quickly, I thought! [Laughter.] Really, the fellow was very good. I said to him, "Gee, these forms are complicated. You have a lot of red tape." He said, "You know, I agree with you, but when I went through training and they were training me, I thought the same thing. But now that I use it, I see that every question helps us to help you more. It's all to your advantage!" And I thought, "Boy, is he well-trained!" [Loud laughter.] said to him, "Boy, there aren't many people here; this office isn't very crowded is it." He said, "You're so lucky. We've been crowded all day—this happens to be the lull and now I can spend more time with you." I recommended him for an award. [Laughter] But the removal of this program from the welfare offices to Social Security offices was another attempt to grant further dignity to the individual. Agreed, that will not have full meaning until there is adequate staff, properly trained in the complex new policy, and located in adequate offices, providing service which preserves individual dignity—and we are opening more offices and we are adding more staff. The law provides that all blind applicants for SSI benefits be referred for vocational rehabilitation—you heard much discussion on that this morning—to the appropriate state or local agency, if they are between the ages of fourteen and sixty-five, and states are receiving one hundred percent Federal dollars for the rehabilitation of the blind and disabled SSI beneficiaries. Rehabilitation of the individual may involve medical care, evaluation, training, and other services, without regard to the

length of time required. Work expenses for blind SSI recipients are excludable from income, and for all recipients the first sixty-five dollars of monthly earned income does not reduce the SSI benefit amount. Indeed, the first twenty dollars, earned or unearned, is not counted so that a person may earn as much as eighty-five dollars a month without any reduction in his or her benefit. Beyond that amount, one dollar of every two dollars is deducted from the basic benefit. The thought behind that provision is to encourage those who wish to work to do so. The effort is to enhance the individual dignity, and we're going to watch it and monitor it to see how it works. Some states have had higher exclusions, I am aware, and we are examining and testing the law against such high standards. We welcome your advice and your suggestions; we want to make this law and the amendments that will follow, sound and equitable. All citizens have a birthright of dignity and freedom.

Let me end with a quote from tenBroek again:

The shackling assumption of the incompetence of recipients must be removed from public assistance law and administration. . . . Public assistance law and administration should operate on the assumption that applicants and recipients have the same rights and powers of self-government that others do, that they are capable of managing their personal affairs, living arrangements, and consumption expenditures. The capacity for self-direction must not be allowed to atrophy from personal disuse or by social worker preemption. It must be kept alive by the daily experience of its employment. Psychological independence and personal dignity must be strengthened even while economic dependence temporarily exists. Above all, a careful system of incentives must be employed to stimulate

ambition and to make personal activity worthwhile. [p. 157]

There is a vital role to be played in monitoring the Supplemental Security system from the outside—indeed, *every* Federal law as it applies to you—and offering comment and critique. That is an essential part of the democratic process. It is an important reason why you should be a member of an articulate organization such as this—that's one of your jobs. [Loud applause] The sympathy and support you have shown us—and incidentally the courtesies you have extended to me personally—have renewed my spirit, and for all our people I want to tell you that the support we have had from you has made it all seem worth the battle, and when you're trying to make those systems work and trying to make dinosaurs sit up and purr, there are some frustrating moments. I am proud to join with you in a common goal, cooperating, communicating, and marching arm in arm in that great common cause that you and your President represent—a better law; a better administered program; a better tomorrow for all the blind of this Nation. [Long applause and cheers]

President JERNIGAN. Mr. Whittier, you had better reconsider whether you want to be a candidate. [Laughter] Well, indeed, we did have a number of questions. I think for my part, you answered most of them—and to my satisfaction. There may be questions that people may have, and if so the chair will now entertain them. We do have some resolutions—we'll deal with those at this time and also see if Mr. Whittier wants to comment on any of them. . . .

Mr. FRANK SMITH. Mr. Whittier, I wish you would respond to a situation which

appears to be developing in several cases that I am personally familiar with and in other areas of the country. When a person goes to the Social Security office and applies for Supplemental Security Income and also the local Social Security representative is made aware that the person has also applied for disability insurance, it appears that the agency then waits until the determination of what the disability payment will be before they make a determination as to what will be paid in Supplemental Security payments. And this of course puts a person in the position where he still has to scramble for enough food to eat on until, as you mentioned, that long process of how much disability is going to be paid is determined. Would you like to respond to that?

Mr. WHITTIER. Yes, you are correct, I regret to say. We have discovered some instances of that. It comes out of a law originally—the law says that before supplemental security you must apply for any other programs for which you are eligible. So, of course, when people come to the Social Security offices, they do apply jointly for disability and for SSI. But the rules, the administrative rules, are that they are to do it jointly so that there will be no delay, and we are attempting to correct that wherever we find it.

Mr. PERRY SUNDQUIST. Mr. Whittier, since your adoption of the Jernigan Amendment for the SSI program this morning, I am a little ashamed to bring this matter up. However, not enough to keep quiet—

Mr. WHITTIER. Well, in California and across the country you are an expert so you may have me in deep trouble—

Mr. SUNDQUIST. Thank you. Section 16:14(1) of the Act—I'm talking about H.R. 1—provides that if a recipient is living with an ineligible spouse the recipient's income and resources shall be deemed to include any income and resources of such spouse whether or not available to such recipient, except to the extent as determined by the Secretary to be inequitable under the circumstances. It's almost a direct quote. The SSI interpretation is said to be to the effect that an ineligible spouse can retain only up to \$130 a month, including work-related expenses, for his or her own support before allocating the remainder of his or her earnings to the recipient. We feel that this is a very inadequate amount, it should be increased, and also provide for work-related expenses for payments on debts incurred for the necessities of life, and, of course, for the support of any minor children. Thank you.

Mr. WHITTIER. Well, the whole deeming application have been the "deemdest" problem I have had to struggle with. We have had quite a number of complaints in exactly that area and we are re-examining all of those. We decided that on a number of them, like the value of a house and so forth, we ought to let the original stand for a period of at least six months or maybe more and see how it was working out. But we do have that complaint; we are reviewing those policies because of the complaints.

Mr. JOHN TAYLOR. Mr. Whittier, it is your lot that I come to you with problems—

Mr. WHITTIER. Mr. Taylor, it will not be the first time.

Mr. TAYLOR. There is a growing concern as a result of one provision of the law and the interpretation being placed on it in a good many parts of the country. That is, the provision of the law which provides that additional amounts of income and resources will be disregarded in the case of individuals who have an approved plan for achieving self-support. In some specific instances, individuals who are receiving some income assistance from state vocational rehabilitation agencies to enable them to take advantage of training opportunities are being told that the SSI payments will be cut because of the allowance they get from the state vocational rehabilitation agency as a part of the state vocational rehabilitation agency's plan to assist the individual to achieve self-support. I wonder if you would articulate the Social Security policy regarding this. I should say that our people are being told that there is a confidential circular being distributed to SSI staff of about March 5, 1974, which outlines the policy that they are governing themselves by.

Mr. WHITTIER. Let me answer that second part first. There are no confidential or secret memos. Under the Freedom of Information Act that has been passed by this Congress or a prior Congress, this society and any citizen is entitled to any information and you ought to have that. So I assure you that there are no secret memos, and we have made our claims manuals available to every state. The question that you raise is accurate. You state it correctly, and it comes out of the law, and it's causing us a great deal of problems—it's causing us more problems in the institutions where there are goods in kind. The law says that any other income must be deducted, unless it meets certain

criteria. We are attempting, where that has worked real hardship, to use the adjective that Mr. Cardwell judged it, of "severe" hardship in some of the institutions. We are attempting to change that administratively. This particular one I would think would fall into that same area and we're just going to have to look at it. If we cannot find a way to do it administratively, we're just going to have to go back and get a change in the law because it's very apparent that in quite a number of instances, although the law is well-intentioned, it seems to be operating against what we would consider sound public policy. That's certainly true in the institutions; so let me say that I'm familiar with the whole broad area; we will look at this one.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Whittier, one other thing on that. It would seem to me that since both SSI and the Voc Rehab program operate under Federal laws passed by the same Congress that it is inappropriate for SSI to reduce SSI benefits paid to an individual because the Voc Rehab program, which is also operated under Federal law, pays income to assist the individual in taking advantage of a training opportunity. Wouldn't it make good sense that if a state rehab program has a plan to assist an individual to achieve self-support and provide some maintenance under that plan, that SSI would recognize that as a bona fide plan to assist the individual to achieve self-support?

Mr. WHITTIER. Well, I think that it is obvious that it is sound public policy to do everything you can do to make people independent; I think that's the aim. What happens is that you get a law passed on a sound principle, and another law based on an equally sound principle, and when the laws are written they sometimes come into

conflict. And I think this is an area that has to be examined. I think we would all unanimously agree. That law which includes the motivation towards independence—and the SSA, Congress wanted it, the President wanted it—in SSI, should be the direction in which we should move. I do understand the conflict.

President JERNIGAN. Mr. Whittier, let me just say this. As I read the law, I believe it is possible for SSI so to interpret the policies that a bona fide plan of self-support under rehab could be exempted—that payments under that could be exempted. And what I would ask you to do is not to make us a commitment today, but to have the thing researched and see whether it can be. We are facing specifically a case in Alabama where this matter is becoming a very warm issue and we have assured people there that we believe this can be done and that where we are going to try to assist them. I know from your attitudes that, if you can, you will interpret this sound public policy this way. So what we would ask you to do is to have it researched and see whether there is a way that it can be so interpreted. If that could be done, it can be of help to people who are under rehabilitation plans and attempting to become self-supporting.

Mr. WHITTIER. Of course, we'd be delighted to. You do understand that I am not the final arbiter; there is a general counsel with whom I have to live and with whom we have many arguments. Could I ask one thing? Please sir, are we getting a record of every one of these? I haven't been writing them down and if we would get a record of all the questions raised, then we can review them because I don't want anything to drop through a crack.

Mr. TAYLOR. If I can comment again. I think that what we have here may be a problem of interpreting to field staff. The

particular situation that I have reference to in Alabama are people who have already developed a plan to achieve self-support, and they are receiving mostly income maintenance assistance from the state rehabilitation agency because the cost of living in the area, and for the program in which they are involved, is by the judgment of the state rehab agency in excess of the SSI allowance.

President JERNIGAN. So Mr. Whittier, then with this discussion we would ask that this be researched and that you get back to us with a determination so that we can inform our people in Alabama and otherwise. I repeat, I feel a great deal of confidence in you and I think this organization does know that you don't write the law. We also know that you do have to live with a general counsel. We also know that you have some administrative discretion. We believe that you will do what you can do and that all I would ask of you is that when you have had this researched out that you get back to us on it and let us know what you can do.

Mr. WHITTIER. One thing we will do. We will take down every question in writing and we will send you a written answer so that if inadvertently it is not accurately answered, you will have a carefully researched and accurately delivered answer with the approval of general counsel.

President JERNIGAN. Very good. [Applause] On this one we want you to lean on general counsel a little, if you can.

RESOLUTION 74-04

WHEREAS the Social Security Administration has interpreted the

Social Security Act Amendments of 1973 in such manner that all new SSI blind recipients who are sixty-five years of age or over must receive aid to the aged rather than aid to the blind; and

WHEREAS of the thirty-five states presently supplementing the SSI grants, grants to blind persons are higher in thirteen states than are grants to the aged; and

WHEREAS Section 1614(2) of the Social Security Act merely contains the standard definition of statutory blindness for purposes of SSI payments with neither a minimum nor a maximum age limitation of any kind; and

WHEREAS the state supplementation of the SSI payment is the money of the state, not of the Federal Government, and must be determined by each state legislature; and

WHEREAS on July 3, 1974, Mr. Sumner Whittier, Director of the Bureau of Supplementary Security Income, announced that effective immediately the Social Security Administration was adopting a reversal of this policy whereby new SSI recipients can apply for the grants to blind persons even though they be sixty-five years of age or over: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 4th day of July, 1974, in the City of Chicago, Illinois, that this organization commend Mr. Whittier for his acceptance of what he so rightly calls the "Jernigan Amendment." □

ACCREDITATION, NAC, AND THE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND:
DR. ADAMS, DR. JERNIGAN, AND THE CONVENTION DISCUSS THE MATTER

President JERNIGAN. I told Dr. Adams this morning that I wanted to make it clear that we did not blame him for HEW's past funding of NAC and the form letters which had been going out over HEW officials names to Congress and to the rest of us; that we considered it a constructive and positive thing that he has come here to hear us and talk with us. He said, "What can I do?" I said, "What you can do as far as I'm concerned is this: (1) You can stop funding NAC out of HEW; [applause] (2) I said, I recognize that if a mistake is made it's difficult for people to stand up and admit that a mistake was made, but at least you can see or try to help us see that the HEW officials stop writing form letters that don't conform to the truth to Congress and the public; [applause] and (3) you can stop putting the HEW stamp of approval on NAC by the funding and by the public statements. This is what we hope; but I want to make it clear, again, that we don't blame you for what's happened. Then I turned to my friend Bill Usdane, whom I'd known in California, and I said to him, "Bill, if I didn't know you were an honest man, I'd be disturbed by the letters I've seen go out over your signature that I know not to be in accordance with the truth." And he said, "Well, I hope I'm an honest man." And I said, "I know you're an honest man, but unless you're locked in and ordered by some superior to write some of these disgraceful form letters, I hope you'll cut it out because some of them just aren't in accordance with the facts." OK, now, I repeat, we are pleased that Dr. Adams has come to talk with us. Dr. Adams has demonstrated while he is

here an interest in what we do because he didn't come just to make a speech and then leave. He came to hear us. He is also going to stay through the afternoon session. I told him, by the way, that when John Proffitt was here on Monday, John Proffitt being out of the Commissioner of Education's Office, that he wasn't very happy with us and we weren't very happy with him. I wasn't at that meeting, but what I heard secondhand of it was that he got up and gave a long dreary history of accreditation which nobody really wanted to hear—we weren't there to talk about history—and then that he, upon being asked, made such statements as, "Well, you people must continue to articulate your feelings." Judy Saunders got up and asked him what that meant, and he said, "Well, we want documentation." Then I am told that he had the cold nerve to say that he had never met with me, that he had never had any documentation from us, and if he said that, it isn't the truth—that's all there is to it. If he said it—I don't know whether he did or not. And then, that there were statements made which implied that because we aren't "professionals"—although I think if he had heard all of this talk today he would have thought differently about that—that because we weren't professionals, we didn't have much right to an opinion on it. Finally, I heard that some people pursued him out to the elevator and said, "Look, you owe us some consideration; after all, our Federal tax dollars pay your salary." And I am told that he replied, "Well, I couldn't live on such a salary; I'm independently wealthy, otherwise I couldn't hold this job," and that somebody said, "Well, maybe you are,

but how then do you think the sheltered workshop workers get along if you can't live on your salary." [Applause] At which instance I am informed that he did not answer, but fled. But I say again to you, it is not just the sheltered shops we are talking to you about—we're talking about the overall, across-the-board, disgraceful situation with NAC. I said to Dr. Adams this morning, "What we're really concerned about is that we think that this is the most important issue facing the blind. We'd like to settle this so that Rehab can work with us in the same kind of partnership and the same kind of mutually helpful relationship that we have with Sumner Whittier and SSI, and the Library of Congress and Kurt Cylke." So, the fact that these gentlemen are here is encouraging. It's my pleasure now to present to you to talk about Accreditation, NAC, and the Quality of Services for the Blind, two people: first Dr. Andrew Adams, U.S. Commissioner of Rehabilitation, Social and Rehabilitation Services, and then he will also be introducing Dr. William Usdane, who is the Assistant Commissioner for Program Development, Rehabilitation Services Administration. It is my pleasure to present to you, Dr. Adams.

Dr. ADAMS. Thank you President Jernigan. I really appreciate being here.

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Dr. Adams, who is confined to a wheelchair as the result of having had polio, sketched his own background and efforts as a handicapped person to advance in his field, education. He emphasized that he came to the Convention to listen more than to talk, and listen he did. Besides giving rehab services to all who need and are eligible to receive them, one of his aims is to see that "handicapped people reach

maximum production, and a full, rewarding life. I think that that's what you were saying all morning. To receive full, rewarding lives means it includes the earned rewards in terms of income. I heard over and over again this morning that those rewards, that are so well earned, are not there."

In outlining some of his principles on the subject of rehabilitation, Dr. Adams said, among other things: "[T]he handicapped know best what's good for them. . . . we can talk about the kinds of things we're expected to go through in our rehabilitation, we can then make the basic decisions and through those decisions, we'll work harder, we'll try harder, we'll be motivated because the plan will be a part of us because we helped formulate it.

"There's a basic principle throughout all management, throughout all programs—and that is that those involved in the decision carry it out best. I think a lot of the comments you made this morning on the NAC accreditation issue says that you were not involved. And I think some of the results of that are showing itself on the issue as it stands today. Those involved in the making of a decision carry it out best, and had you been fully involved, I'm sure that whatever decision that would have been made, would have been carried out better than the state of affairs as it is today." [Applause]

Dr. Adams then briefly summarized some of the new directions of programs under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1973 and of what those new directions might mean to the severely handicapped. As the noon hour approached he began to feel somewhat pressed for time: "I want to go a little faster here. I know your

President is getting nervous about the time. . . .”

President JERNIGAN. Look Dr. Adams, let me just say this to you about the time. I know it is not your intention not to have questions and it certainly isn't mine. You talk to your heart's content; we'll adjourn at 12:15; you come back and talk after lunch if you want to; and when you get through, we've got some questions we want to put to you and also to Dr. Usdane. You know we're happy to have you talk as much as you like and we're enjoying what you have to say. When that's all done though, we're still going to want to have some talk directly on the NAC issue with questions to you from the audience. [Loud applause]

Dr. Adams went on with his summary of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act Amendments and set forth what he deemed eight basic freedoms to be achieved for handicapped persons: (1) the right to employment; (2) the right to education; (3) the right to housing; (4) the right to transportation; (5) the right to use public accommodations; (6) the right to recreation; (7) the right to health care; (8) the right to access to cast an election ballot. He concluded: "As other segments of our population have petitioned for recognition, let us do the same for disabled Americans, as legislated in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Indeed, let it be known that henceforth, there shall be no discrimination based on race, creed, age, ethnic origin, gender, and physical or mental handicap."

At the conclusion of Dr. Adams' speech, President Jernigan made a final comment before adjournment.

President JERNIGAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Adams. Let me say something to you before we come back after lunch for questions. I believe this is the sentiment of the crowd—you will see in a minute—but I think we've talked about this enough over the years. We're going to be talking with you in the context that I have indicated earlier. We appreciate your coming here. We in no way wish to have confrontations. We believe that you're going to work with us in good faith. But it is essential that you not go away with a misassessment about what we are prepared to do and what we are going to do. We say this without belligerence and without hostility; but let me make it clear what we think. In the final analysis, generalities won't cut it. [Applause] Now what do I mean by that? Let me just quickly say it: you're new and we recognize that, and you haven't had time to do some of these things, and I'm not saying that you're not planning to. Let me first deal with the fact of whether NAC is a battle and do we have a general war concerning the rights of the handicapped and we at least ought to work together on that. If you, in your position as Commissioner, will help us solve the NAC problem, then we will work cooperatively and vigorously with you in the total war concerning the handicapped. [Applause] If you will not, and if you say to us, "Let us work together on those things we agree on, and agree to disagree on NAC," our answer to you is, "No! We won't do it." [Applause] Now further—let me just spell it out a little further to this extent: We feel that the NAC issue is so vital; that it will destroy good programs for the blind; that it everyday hurts the lives of blind people. And therefore, since it is that basic, we will take the same position that Winston Churchill took during the Second World War toward the Nazis—that is, NAC's

enemy is our friend; NAC's friend is our enemy—and there will be no compromise on that. [Loud applause] In other words, finally, if HEW will help us reform NAC—stop its funding or see that it's reformed—then we will work with you cooperatively on any other constructive issue. If HEW will not do that, then we will turn the guns of war on HEW and the Office for the Blind. [Loud shouts and applause] We will do that despite the fact that we know that it will earn us a good deal of ill will, that it will earn us a good deal of accusation that we are being negative, that it will hurt us, that we will take casualties—but in the long run we feel we have no alternative if that happens. Please do not go away misassessing our mood, and misassessing what we are and what we think. We *want* to work with you. We *want* to be part of a total coalition with you. Don't misassess what we are and what we think. Now we'll come back after lunch and we'll take questions and we'll talk about this, and we'll talk about it in the context of the total morning session and of your remarks, which we appreciate.

President JERNIGAN. The Chair has a few questions to ask Dr. Adams. We'll then open it to questions from the audience. . . . Dr. Adams, as I indicated to you this morning, we are concerned that generalities not be used in order to confuse issues, and that we clearly understand each other. I told you before lunch, and this group told you, that unless this issue can be settled we will find ourselves on a total war footing with Rehabilitation Services and no talk in the world about "we're all engaged in a war against discrimination" or "we're all really working for the same thing" or it's "communication" or "let's all get together"—all that will slide off of us like

water off a duck's back—it won't matter. Now I recognize that you are new in the job. I recognize, as I've said repeatedly this morning, that the past sins of RSA and HEW and SRS and all the other business, are not your sins. Dr. Usdane has more difficulty coming off equally clean, but Dr. Usdane, on the other hand, may well have been acting under orders. You give orders—you are the Commissioner. Therefore, what I wish to know from you at this time, if you can tell us in as much specifics as possible, after hearing our talk this morning and after observing this group, what are you now prepared to do concerning NAC?

Dr. ADAMS. Thank you. I agree with your President that basic principles and broad goals and aims are important for us to keep our eye on the ball of where we're going and what we're trying to achieve, but they don't give answers specifically, only guidance to such an issue as you've become involved in and now I have with you. Let me say this specifically: My reaction to the issue as presented is that accreditation is a part of accountability, which is a part of quality programs for the blind. And that I'm sure we're all for. The question is whether or not the accreditation system which you're addressing is doing the job to bring about *quality* in the programs for the blind, and consequently can be used in terms of accountability for those quality programs, or lack of quality. You're questioning whether they are the proper tools for bringing about quality: you're saying, in effect, that in many cases—you're presenting evidence—that they are not bringing about quality but actually quite the reverse, which is a very, very serious matter. So for the reasons of the need to obtain quality programs, plus the fact that such a large, concerned, dedicated

organization as the Federation of the Blind has such strong feelings and concerns about our accreditation system, I am compelling myself to do all I can to try to resolve this issue the best way possible so that we end up with the best accreditation system possible to achieve quality programs. The best way I think I can do that now is to offer the full use of my office, myself personally, suggest an extended invitation that representatives of your Federation, and all organizations involved in this issue, meet with us in Washington and start tackling this issue head on—with the hope that it can be resolved best to the satisfaction of all organizations involved and, if that is not possible, best to the programs for the blind as possible. Thank you.

President JERNIGAN. O K , n o w D r . Adams, I understand from that that you are prepared to call a meeting. NAC will, of course, tell you two or three other agency groups that will be glad to meet and we'll find ourselves, if we aren't careful, with the office—or with HEW officials or your office—sitting as kind of an umpire, and with the Federation representatives there—although they represent fifty thousand plus blind people—dealing with a great number of people purporting to represent different groups but in reality representing one block, agencies doing work with the blind. That meeting may or may not serve a purpose; if you call such a meeting, indeed we shall go, but I think we'll get bogged down in a variety of things. I want to deal specifically with some other things. HEW, through your office, has now given to NAC more than \$600,000. It's money that we feel could have been better spent. It is continuing. The General Accounting Office is in the process of making an investigation of

NAC—that investigation goes on interminably. It's easy to have different groups in the establishment play the game about it. Even before the investigation was completed, Congressmen were asking, specifically Congressman Landgrebe asked, and others did, that any funding for NAC be held up until that investigation was over. It was not held up. Last January—the grant was delayed briefly—but last January it was then approved for another year. We wish to know: Are you prepared, until this issue is resolved concerning NAC and its accountability and its credibility and its basic viability and democracy, are you prepared either to hold up that funding or not to renew it, or are you prepared to tell us something as an interim that you will do along that line. Because if that funding under you is continued, that is, if, when this year runs up no matter what speeches are made, another grant is given, then we'll find ourselves in confrontation. What are you prepared to do about that?

Dr. ADAMS. Excellent question. Now it is my understanding—Dr. Usdane, please correct me if I'm wrong—it is my understanding that our plans call for the funding of the project past January 1, 1975, for one-half of what we've been putting into it annually, which is \$45,000. Is that correct?

President JERNIGAN. It was higher than forty-five thousand to begin with; I don't know if that's—

Dr. ADAMS. By the year, but I say that our plans call for funding it from January 1 to June 30th of 1975 at \$45,000, because that's half a year and we've been funding it at \$90,000 for this year, this ongoing year. It is also my understanding that we have not signed off on the grant of that \$45,000

for January 1 to June 30th of 1975. Therefore, let me say now, and I'm making this decision right now because, as you know, I came with no pre-decisions on this issue: Let me say that I will not sign that grant until we together, if you accept my invitation, meet to explore the issue, and hopefully the action taken after those meetings will determine whether or not I approve that grant.

President JERNIGAN. Very well. If I understand what you're saying to us it is this: that there will be a meeting held, that you will not sign a continuation of the grant—the \$45,000—for next year, until after that meeting and unless you are satisfied with what comes out of that meeting. Is that correct?

Dr. ADAMS. Yes sir, let me—I'm just checking another thing. In our budget HEW has requested, as you probably know, the \$45,000 for that grant. I was just conferring with Dr. Usdane while you were talking, if we are legally obligated because Congress appropriates it—

President JERNIGAN. The President of the United States hasn't had any difficulty in impounding any other funds—
[Laughter and applause]

Dr. ADAMS. I would hope that we would find that if the present project is not the most advantageous use of that \$45,000 for accrediting purposes, I would hope that together, that we will be able to develop a project to continue the effort for quality programs that can justify the expenditure of the \$45,000.

President JERNIGAN. OK, let me see if I understand what you're saying you'll do. As I understand what you're telling me:

whatever we decide about the rest of this year's grant, or whatever happens on anything else, that you will call a meeting and at that meeting issues will be discussed, and that unless you find that you are legally mandated to sign that \$45,000 for next year, that unless you are satisfied that it should be signed after that meeting and in accordance with what you learn, unless it's satisfactory with you, that you won't sign it. Is that what you're telling me?

Dr. ADAMS. I could best answer that by saying that my approval, if it is within my legal jurisdiction, which I assume it is at this moment in time, I will have an open mind as of this moment and through our meetings, an open mind as to whether or not I'll approve it as is until we can have our meetings—which leaves open the possibility that I may not approve it; I may approve a revised project; or I may approve the project as is. Is that fair enough?

President JERNIGAN. All right, I don't know if it's fair enough or not, but it's clear. I want to be sure that it's clear. Let me see if I can ask you just this one more thing. The \$45,000, before you approve it, will you commit that you will let us know that you intend to approve it, if you do, and you will let us know why? I would regard it as satisfactory if you wrote and said, or called and said, "I have examined and found your charges false, and therefore we're going to approve it." In other words, will you, before you approve it, will you tell us you are going to do so and why you did?

Dr. ADAMS. I think that's only fair. I assume you will be accepting the invitation to meet with us to discuss the aspects of this; and you're asking that as a result of this interaction, at the decision

point-in-time where I have to make a decision, before I make the decision, if I intend to approve the grant as is, that I inform you first. May I ask how much lead time you would like before that decision ever came to that point?

President JERNIGAN. A week.

Dr. ADAMS. All right, that's fair enough. I certainly agree to do that.

President JERNIGAN. We have time for what we need to do in a week. [Applause] Now let me deal with the meeting. Now you said you assumed we'll attend the meeting. Let me explore with you for a minute and then I'll tell you whether or not we will. We do not wish to have the kind of equality that at one time prevailed in the United Nations. That is, we do not wish to find ourselves in confrontation with one adversary who comes in the guise of fifteen. In other words, the kind of meeting we would like to hold with you is a meeting at which you or your designee will be present, and NAC and however many you or they decide, and the Federation and however many people we or you decide from the Federation. We would not like to have included in that meeting lots of satellite groups from NAC. Will you hold such a meeting as that with us? I don't care if you hold other meetings and who else you invite to them, but we want *that* meeting held.

Dr. ADAMS. Sounds like we're talking about more than one kind of meeting. As I see it, I think it's important to have representatives of all concerned major organizations at the meeting—

President JERNIGAN. So do we, Dr. Adams, but we think—but that's what we

just said. That is, that NAC and its satellites—the American Foundation created NAC; they interact; they exchange staff members; the American Council is NAC's instrument in this area—we're not willing to sit down, as I say, and confront fifteen guys who all pretend to be different things, who are in reality sub-parts of the same thing. We don't really care if you hold other meetings with somebody else, that's what I was saying. We're not suggesting other meetings, but we're just saying that for a meeting to be productive, we'd like the major parties to be present—that is, the blind, and the NAC constellation of agencies, and the Federal establishment in HEW. And we're asking you if you will hold with us a meeting involving NAC and its representatives, and the Federation and its representatives, and you and your representatives. That's what we want.

Dr. ADAMS. Yes sir.

President JERNIGAN. V e r y g o o d . [Applause] And I understand that to mean that other people will not be at that meeting.

Dr. ADAMS. I understand the same.

President JERNIGAN. I now address myself to this audience. Are you willing that your President and people he may appoint, attend such a meeting with full power to make commitments in the name of the blind of this Nation at such a meeting? [Prolonged assenting applause] I would regard that as a moderately clear mandate. [Laughter] Very well, we'll see if NAC comes to that meeting with the same mandate. Now I think we should open this to questions from the floor, and will you please give me your name. . . .

Mr. JAMES GASHEL. This is directed to Dr. Adams. Dr. Adams, as you know there's been considerable correspondence over the years, and certainly over the past few months, concerning this NAC issue. Now, I've had occasion to talk about some of this correspondence with Federal officials within HEW. Specifically, I refer to a letter from a Mr. Stephen Kurzman, in which he alleged a number of things about our having freely attended meetings and such of the NAC. Now I had occasion to try to talk with Mr. Kurzman on this earlier this year—again, this is before you came on the scene, so therefore you are not held accountable for any of this, but I think you and this audience ought to know it—I had occasion to try to talk with Mr. Kurzman earlier this year on this subject, and, as you might expect, I was unable to see him. But I did see some other people who talked to me about it. One of the people I saw—and we had a very candid discussion about this—I showed him correspondence backward and forward over the months, I let him read some documentation, and then I showed him the Kurzman letter to Congressman Sarasin of Connecticut, and I said, “OK, now look. Do you really believe that Kurzman understands the issues, do you believe he's telling the truth to the Congressman?” I was shocked and amazed with the reaction I got. He said, “No, look, he clearly isn't telling the truth.” But he went on to say something else which I thought was an utter disgrace—he said, “It really doesn't matter. Now you know,” he said, “ultimately it really doesn't matter. After all, Kurzman knows the Congressman, he can go over and sit down, he can talk to him, and get him to lay off.” And I think that's a disgrace to every self-respecting American and to every self-respecting blind person across this country. [Applause] As I say, you're not

accountable for this kind of thing—for this kind of reaction, but I hope after today it *does* matter, and I hope you'll take that message back to HEW with you—

President JERNIGAN. He is not *yet* accountable, and I hope you're right that there won't be a situation where he will. Dr. Adams, do you want to make any comments on that, or let it rest as is?

Dr. ADAMS. I'd rather let it rest, but something compels me to say that in working in Steve Kurzman, I don't believe that he doesn't personally consider it of high importance. And I'm not saying that what you're saying is wrong, and you didn't say he didn't personally consider it of high importance, and he said that it didn't matter. And that involves the channels it went through, and I cannot comment on that. But personally, I'm sure that Steve Kurzman would be just as hurt as you are to think that something that important would be considered by others as being not important, I guess is what I'm saying.

President JERNIGAN. Dr. Adams, I saw the Kurzman letter, and it doesn't tell the truth. I so state, and you haven't seen the letter. But I state to you that I saw it, and I know some other people who saw it, and on the record we can show you documentation that that letter is a blatant falsehood. Anyway, I won't ask you to comment on it—you haven't seen the letter.

Mr. BILL KAPLER. This deals with fair representation in this country. We know that the National Federation of the Blind has more than fifty thousand members. We know that our counterfeit has about two thousand members, and we know that the

great veterans have about two thousand members. Are you, therefore, willing to go to these three organizations and have them send representatives to you, named by their organizations, in accordance with this distribution? In other words, this organization would send twenty-five representatives; the other two organizations would each send one—

President JERNIGAN. Bill, look, let me intervene and say this. As far as I'm concerned, I'm willing for Dr. Adams to consult with anyone he wants to consult, and I don't really care that he makes us a quota of representatives. I don't really *want* to attend a meeting with the American Council of the Blind. I don't think they represent anybody. [Applause] What I think we ought to ask of him is this—that he have an open line for reasonable communications with us. I don't expect to call him every day. Neither he nor I have that kind of time. But I think if I call him, or Jim Gashel calls him in Washington or Arlene calls him in Washington, I think that he ought to have an open line and listen to what we have to say. Whether he is able to act on it or not, or whether he is ever able to, I think he ought to listen to what we have to say and give it consideration. I'd like to know if you'll do that.

Dr. ADAMS. Yes sir. I think the answer to the first question by the gentleman in the audience was answered by the dialogue between your President and myself on the meeting we're going to set up. So we're all right there, right?

President JERNIGAN. ACB and these other groups haven't anything to do with this meeting. This is NAC, and RSA, and the Federation.

Dr. ADAMS. That's the way I understand it. The answer to the President's question on the open line: I don't think I would be responsive, in my present position, if I did not warmly receive—I should say openly receive—any call from your President, who represents such a vast, impressive organization of our handicapped population. So I'm trying to say that I will welcome these calls, I will be responsive to these calls, and I do hope and feel confident that I will keep in close touch.

President JERNIGAN. Let me move on to Muzzy [Marcelino] on this one; we'll come back if time permits.

Mr. MARCELINO. Dr. Adams, do you not think that it's reasonable that on the NAC Board of Directors that the organized blind should have reasonable and meaningful representation—not handpicked people by NAC, handpicked blind people by NAC, not handpicked people who are employees or officials of agencies serving the blind, but representatives selected by and accountable to the blind? This NAC is not just another accrediting agency such as agencies that accredit schools or hospitals. The NAC policies affect the lives of every blind person in the country. And the NAC policies are hurting blind people. We cannot continue in the same pattern we have for these years that NAC has been in existence, and the blind people are determined that reforms must be made soon. We're impatient with the delaying tactics of the NAC and the Federal Government.

Dr. ADAMS. My response to that is that I would have no quarrel with the question as you raise it. However, I think the conclusion of that question should be determined as an agenda item for the

meeting that your President will attend. I think this is an excellent discussion point and I think it should be handled.

Mr. MARCELINO. How do you feel about having meaningful representation on that Board?

President JERNIGAN. I think he said he was willing for that.

Dr. ADAMS. I said I cannot argue with your principle that you're giving me—that there should be representation—and certainly the blind should be heard in determining any policies dealing with accreditation. I agree with your principles, but I say the specifics of that answer should come from this meeting.

President JERNIGAN. Dr. Adams, what they have done in the past—they have about a thirty-three member Board, and they first had, I think, four blind people on there—in fact I was on there—so that's tokenism of the worst order, an attempt to embarrass, and all kinds of things. But anyway, I was on there. I got off the Board—they made it clear that I was not there representing the blind, but representing me. And I made it clear in accepting it that I didn't approve of NAC, but would come on; but after we'd both made whatever we made clear, I was on there. Now, as we began to put on pressure, they upped the numbers until I think they have thirteen blind people on the Board: like, for instance, the blind director of the American Foundation for the Blind—they set NAC up and they say he represents the blind; then Dr. MacFarland of the Office of the Blind in your agency—and they said that he represented the blind. They have other fine people like that on there. They represent the blind, and they say they can't

put representatives of our Federation on there—elected by us, recallable by us—because that would, as they put it, violate their corporate charter. After all, they have to elect their own members. When we point out to them that's a technicality, that all kinds of organizations set up policies whereby the board ratifies the election of certain people that an organization may want on their board—there are mechanisms for doing it—all they do is simply act shocked as if they don't know what we're talking about. And we go on and tell them we want representation on their Board, representation of the blind, and they say, "But we *have* blind people on our Board, you see. I don't know what they're talking about." Not a very mysterious concept. But in the pursuance of Mr. Marcelino's question, I want to press home the issue. I think, at least I understood you to say, that you could not quarrel with the principle that the organized blind ought to have representatives on the Board. Is that what you said?

Dr. ADAMS. Yes.

President JERNIGAN. That's what he says he said. [Applause]

Mr. JONATHAN MAY. Dr. Adams, this morning you mentioned in your address that one of the principles that you go by was that you were an implementer of legislation that was laid down by Congress. This is just going to elaborate a little more on what was said. The 1964 Equal Economic Opportunity Act established the principle of consumer representation; and the 1966 Comprehensive Health Planning Act, § 314(3)(b), says that a majority of consumer representatives must be on state boards in order to receive health funds

from the Federal Government. Now that is a legislative mandate. The second point is that your department, HEW, SRS, has issued a document of some type called "A Draft Report on the NAC Site Visit" of March 20-21 of last year. On page 5, number 4 of that it states, paraphrased, that because NAC believes it's Board members must be experts, they must be appointed to the Board. So you have an absolute contradiction here between what the U.S. Congress has mandated with our tax dollars, and what the NAC, a private organization, is doing—

President JERNIGAN. With Federal money—

Mr. MAY. With my tax dollars and yours, Dr. Adams. Sir, the last question: You said this morning you've been around handicapped—you've had a long career in the work with the handicapped. And that, of course, includes some blind people. You have no doubt been exposed to the field long enough. And then this morning you said that you have never been impressed by such numbers—by such, you know, the force of the organized blind. You made it quite emphatic to us all. Sir, can you tell me unequivocally—yes or no answer—do you or do you not believe that the National Federation of the Blind represents the blind people of the United States of America?

Dr. ADAMS. [Long pause.] My assistant, Dr. Urdane, just whispered that it's a tough question, and that's why I'm hesitating. You ask it as a totally representative question. I certainly can say my reaction to the meeting and from information I had before the meeting tells me that—and I don't know how best to project this—but tells me that you represent, you are a

strong, great representation of the blind. That I am convinced. Whether it's absolutely total and there are no other organizations representing the blind I certainly couldn't say from here. But I can say, I do react that you greatly and strongly represent the blind of America. That's obvious. . . .

President JERNIGAN. OK, you have heard what you've heard. Who was next? [Many ask for the floor.] Now look, let me tell you what I have committed to see how you are on this. I told Dr. Adams and Dr. Urdane that I would let them go by three o'clock. It's four minutes to three. I do not have the means, you know, of putting them in bondage—keeping them here. And furthermore, I think their wish to go is not a wish to flee. Dr. Adams has responded to our questions. [Applause] I think he's made meaningful commitments to us and I have no reason to believe he won't carry those out. I think if he does, this bodes very well. There are many things he has committed here which are very basic and which none of his predecessors ever committed. I want to give a chance for you to speak, but I think, in all fairness to him, the final remarks on this subject ought to be his. He ought to have a chance at the end to say what he wants to say, and after all the questions are asked. Now Shirley?

Mrs. LEBOWITZ. Dr. Adams, the question I have is concerning Federal funds to agencies and schools for the blind. Many of them have been threatened that if they don't become NAC accredited they will lose their Federal funds. Four weeks ago we had a meeting with the superintendent of the Oak Hill School for the Blind, and in answer to our question as to whether they would seek NAC accreditation, he said they would rather not, but they were afraid they

would lose their Federal funds. That sounds like blackmail to me. Would you please discuss this?

Dr. ADAMS. As some of you know, I spent a great deal of time as a teacher—I mentioned it this morning—as a teacher, a principal, a superintendent of schools—my last job was superintendent of schools in Kansas City, Missouri, for three years. So now with my participation on the rehabilitation side of really the joint effort of doing all we can for handicapped children and adults, I see no way that you should be blackmailed and having this accreditation issue determine whether or not a school system receives Federal funds to carry out special education. [Applause] If in fact this may be a possibility because of legal people involved, I can give you full assurance, being that I played for that education ball team for many years, too, that I will be in there battling that that kind of thing should never, never hurt our handicapped children.

Mrs. LEBOWITZ. Thank you, Dr. Adams.

Mr. MANUEL URENA. Dr. Adams, last year or so was a review done by HEW people and other about NAC's activities. There was a minority report filed by one Dr. Richard Wilson, and my request to you, to see if you are willing to commit, is that (1) would you read that report if it hasn't been made available to you already, and (2) that you discuss that report with Dr. Wilson—I'm sure that he would be glad to discuss it with you—before this meeting takes place.

Dr. ADAMS. Yes. [Applause.]

President JERNIGAN. All right, that's the last question we'll take. I want to ask one question of Dr. Adams and Dr. Usdane, and then offer Dr. Adams and/or Dr. Usdane the opportunity to make any closing remarks they care to make. HEW consistently replies to Congress with form letters, and either half truths or untruths, concerning us and concerning the NAC issue. Some of those letters have gone out over Dr. Usdane's signature. I wish to know, if you are willing to tell us, that you will review the so-called facts and the so-called fact sheet that Dr. MacFarland, who is a long-time member of NAC himself, keeps preparing and circulating over the signature of various people, to Congressmen and others; and if you will, as a matter of fact, review the form letters that have been going out from your office concerning NAC? In other words, will the whole question of the correspondence that's being fed to Congress concerning NAC, and particularly the part which Dr. MacFarland has played in it—since he himself is a member of NAC and is still being called on to prepare fact sheets and to comment on the goodness of NAC when he's part of it—will you review this whole situation to determine the accuracy of what I've told you? I'm not saying will you change it, just will you review it to see if it's accurate?

Dr. ADAMS. I'm answering yes, but why don't we get Dr. Usdane to say *something* here?—

President JERNIGAN. I thought that maybe in view of his behavior in the whole business he'd be ashamed to say anything. Didn't want to embarrass him. The floor is yours from now on—you can do with it what you please, until you're ready to go. But I do want you to respond to my

question, and I want him to. Will you review the stuff that's been going out of the office and see that before any more of the form letters and of this particular fact sheet go out—will you at least review to see what the accuracy of it is? That's all I want to know, and then whatever you and Dr. Usdane want to say, the floor is yours.

Dr. ADAMS. Yes; my answer to your specific question on reviewing the correspondence is absolutely—it must be done. [Applause] Rather than go on verbalizing, and with the time, and being late with your program—because I know that there are other items you are pushing forward—I'm going to put just my concluding statements—I've already put it in writing—and I'm going to give this to your President as I read because I wrote on top of the proclamation, so it's kind of a suggestion maybe that you'll have a chance to review this proclamation—but what I wrote is, “Dr. Jernigan: Thank you so very much for this *excellent* meeting. And many thanks to Mrs. Jernigan. I truly look forward to our working together. You and your Federation are great!” And I signed it, “Andy Adams.” Thank you very much for inviting me here to this very important meeting, and getting into a very important issue that I will do all I can with you to resolve. [Vigorous applause]

President JERNIGAN. We appreciate your coming. We have recorded the comments, of course. We will publish the comments verbatim as they were recorded; and we believe that you will remember—we will remember. We appreciate your coming. We believe that you have engaged in give-and-take discussion with us in a way that an official of our Government should, and, as I say, we will now look to the future and hope for a better and finer

relationship with RSA. Thank you very much. Dr. Usdane is not going to speak, I gather. Oh, he says he will! [Applause]

Dr. USDANE. Well, I never thought I'd be publically acknowledged as a sinner. [Laughter] But all those things come home to roost. And I do really want to say one thing, that even though we have had some acting commissioners for a long time and hadn't had one appointed, we now have a Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration who can *act*.

President JERNIGAN. Well, that's a pretty speech. I have no quarrel with that. All right, Manuel, give us a resolution.

The NAC resolutions were read and adopted. [These will be published subsequently] Then B. T. Kimbrough from *Dialogue* magazine sought and obtained the floor.

Mr. KIMBROUGH. Mr. Chairman, . . . I wish if you would, to clarify a point concerning the forthcoming meeting in Washington between representatives of NFB, representatives of NAC, Dr. Adams and his representatives. This is an extremely important meeting, and ordinarily I would assume that a member of the independent press, namely myself, would be permitted to be in this meeting. However, because you have been so explicit in indicating who should be in the meeting, I think I should ask you if I correctly assume that a reporter will be permitted to attend this meeting?

President JERNIGAN. Mr. Kimbrough, welcome to the Federation Convention. [Applause] Stay at the mike just a minute. You will observe, Mr. Kimbrough, that although I said to you last year that I

didn't know whether you would report fairly or not, that when I thought you had I came out at least and gave equal time in saying that. Now, my commitment to open meetings is of long standing. Let me tell you not only for this meeting, but for any other meeting that I ever have anything to do with, I would have no objection to the press being there, and I hope they will. What I'm concerned about, Mr. Kimbrough, is that *Dialogue* or any other group, not be there as a participant. I'm perfectly happy to have anyone sit around and listen, and the press to report on it to their heart's content, and I hope you'll come. But you know that depends on Dr. Adams' being willing to it—I'm sure he

would. But let me tell you that the Federation is willing. I'm sure you took that for granted, as you say, but let's put it on the record.

Mr. KIMBROUGH. Let me simply say that any reporter who comes to a meeting planning to do anything as a participant, doesn't understand the anatomy of reporting.

President JERNIGAN. You know, you're a good man. You ought to come and join us one day, Mr. Kimbrough. [Shouts and applause] You will *have* to after what you wrote about NAC and the Foundation, anyway, in your last issue. □

IN ALL INNOCENCE: COME ON, MR. ROBINSON!

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, July 8, 1974.

Mr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,
*President, National Federation of the Blind,
Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: Your letter of June 28 has been received. It is regrettable that despite our extensive correspondence we are still unable to agree on an agenda, or a time or a place for a meeting to seek some constructive understanding between our organizations.

It has occurred to me that the good offices of a third party might help us to move ahead. Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have written to the Honorable Caspar Weinberger in this regard. I hope you will join with me in requesting the assistance of the Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare in achieving an early and fruitful meeting.

Sincerely,

DANIEL D. ROBINSON.

cc: Dr. Andrew S. Adams
Mr. James S. Dwight, Jr.
Dr. James F. Garrett
Dr. Douglas C. MacFarland
Mr. John R. Proffitt
Hon. Caspar W. Weinberger

July 8, 1974.

The Honorable CASPAR W. WEINBERGER,
*Secretary, Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR SECRETARY WEINBERGER: This letter is to ask your good offices in helping

us to resolve a distressing situation in the field of services to blind and visually handicapped Americans.

For many months the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) has been seeking ways to arrive at some joint, constructive understanding with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in the interest of achieving better services for all blind persons.

We suggested that staff meet to plan the agenda and mechanics of a meeting to be attended by officers and board members of the respective organizations. This was not acceptable to NFB, however. We then suggested a time, place, and agenda for a top level meeting which we believe embodies the matters that Dr. Jernigan, President of NFB, has said he wishes to discuss.

Unfortunately, several exchanges of correspondence, of which we'd be happy to send you copies, have not produced agreement on the time, the place, or the agenda.

Our attempts have reflected not only our desire for a successful resolution of the present difficulties but also the expressed hopes of various members of your staff and of members of the Congress. We are concerned that we do not seem to be making much progress and we believe it may be appropriate to turn to you for help at this time.

In view of the past interest expressed by the Department, would it be possible for you to designate an individual or unit within DHEW to assist in fixing the agenda for an NFB-NAC meeting, setting up the

meeting, and serving as an impartial facilitation.

To our knowledge, at least four unit heads within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare are familiar with this situation. They are: Mr. James S. Dwight, Jr., Administrator of Social and Rehabilitation Service; Dr. Andrew S. Adams, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, SRS; Dr. Douglas C. MacFarland, Director, Office of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, RSA, SRS; and Mr. John R. Proffitt, Director, Office of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, RSA, SRS; and Mr. John R. Proffitt, Director, Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Staff, Office of Education.

Naturally, we cannot speak for NFB in this matter, but since Dr. Jernigan has stated his desire to meet as soon as possible we know of no reason why he would not welcome the assistance of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in achieving an early and fruitful meeting.

Thank you very much for your past interest and for your consideration of this request.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,

DANIEL D. ROBINSON.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
Des Moines, Iowa, July 17, 1974.

Mr. DANIEL D. ROBINSON,
*President, National Accreditation
Council for Agencies Serving the
Blind and Visually Handicapped,
New York, New York.*

DEAR MR. ROBINSON: This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 8,

1974, along with the copy of your letter to Secretary Weinberger. I herewith send you my own letter to Secretary Weinberger, as well as a copy of an article from the *Chicago Tribune* dated July 6, 1974. Oh, what a tangled web we weave!

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

cc: Dr. Andrew S. Adams
Mr. James S. Dwight, Jr.
Dr. James F. Garrett
Dr. Douglas C. MacFarland
Mr. John R. Proffitt
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger

July 17, 1974.

The Honorable CASPAR W. WEINBERGER,
Secretary, Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SECRETARY WEINBERGER: Under date of July 8, 1974, Mr. Daniel Robinson, the President of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, sent you a letter. He indicated the NAC has been trying unsuccessfully for many months to arrange a meeting with the National Federation of the Blind. Unfortunately a review of the correspondence will demonstrate that Mr. Robinson's statements do not accord with the facts. We have repeatedly tried to get NAC to meet with us at the policy level to discuss basic issues—all to no avail.

Perhaps the timing of Mr. Robinson's letter is pure coincidence, but you might

like to have certain information. On Friday, July 5, 1974, Dr. Andrew Adams, Federal Rehabilitation Commissioner, publicly stated that he would not authorize further Federal grants to NAC unless, after holding a meeting with NAC and the NFB, he was satisfied that a continuation of NAC funding was warranted. He said that he would try to arrange the meeting for August. Further, we publicly agreed upon the participants and the basic agenda. The *Chicago Tribune* for Saturday, July 6, (copy attached) reported the whole affair. It is my belief that NAC was aware of these occurrences.

Under date of July 8, 1974, (three days after the statement by Dr. Adams and two days after the *Tribune* article) NAC wrote to you and innovently requested that a meeting be held under the auspices of HEW. They suggested that Dr. MacFarland, Mr. Dwight, Mr. Proffitt, or Dr. Adams convene the meeting. They know quite well the attitudes of some of these people concerning the problems the blind have been having with NAC. Is all of this mere coincidence? Perhaps.

In any case I thought you should be apprised of the meeting which Dr. Adams said he would call. We look forward to attending and hope for constructive results. The blind of the Nation have waited long and tried diligently for the reform of NAC.

Very truly yours,

KENNETH JERNIGAN,
President,
National Federation of the Blind.

U.S. AIDE TO HOLD BACK ACCREDITING UNIT FUNDS

[Reprinted with permission from the *Chicago Tribune*, Saturday, July 6, 1974.]

A Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare official said yesterday he will not authorize next year's grant to the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped until a meeting is held about reforming the Council.

The National Federation of the Blind, in its last day of a convention at the Palmer House, elicited that promise during a confrontation with Andrew S. Adams, HEW's Commissioner of Rehabilitation of the Social and Rehabilitation Service.

For years, the Federation has been fighting against the Accreditation Council, which sets standards for schools, workshops, and agencies for blind persons. The Council is partially funded with Federal money, and has spent \$650,000 of tax money since formation in 1966.

The Federation, representing 50,000 of the estimated 400,000 blind Americans, opposes the Council because no blind persons elected from a representative blind organization serve on its 33-member board.

The Federation also contends there is no relationship between accreditation and quality of blind agencies, and that some

accredited agencies pay less than minimum wages to blind workers.

A Federation spokesman also said the Council takes the attitude that blind persons should be sheltered rather than given an opportunity to improve themselves.

In response to questions from Kenneth Jernigan, Federation President, Adams said he would not authorize the Council's \$45,000 grant for the first half of next year until he discusses possible reform with representatives of the Federation and the Council.

His announcement brought cheers from the two thousand blind persons who came from around the country to the five-day Convention.

"The feelings and evidence presented by such a strong and powerful group as the Federation cannot go ignored by Federal representatives," said Adams, who has held his post for two months.

In another action, the Federation passed a resolution calling on Amtrak to change a regulation which some Amtrak officials interpret as requiring another person or guide dog to accompany blind persons traveling by train. □

CONVENTION ADOPTS RESOLUTION AGAINST COALITIONS

RESOLUTION 74-A

WHEREAS the National Federation of the Blind has always been committed to the principle that the blind have distinctive needs for services: not to be confused or shuffled in with the needs of other minorities, the deaf, the orthopedically impaired, the cerebral palsied, or similar disability groups; and

WHEREAS the record of successes and achievements in work with the blind has been measured by our progress in gaining recognition of the special needs and unique identity of those who are blind; and

WHEREAS our own successes and achievements in advancing the welfare of the blind have served as precedents and models for equivalent gains by other groups such as the permanently and totally disabled, and the aged; and

WHEREAS efforts still persist to reduce or confuse the special identity and needs of the blind by mingling them in with other groups for purposes of administrative convenience or the advantage of others; and

WHEREAS among these efforts is a well-intentioned but misguided attempt to merge the interests of the organized blind with those of other minorities, the deaf, the orthopedically impaired, the cerebral palsied, and similar disability groups, in coalitions for various purposes; and

WHEREAS the organized blind have only

the best wishes and hopes for the welfare and goals of other minorities, the deaf, the orthopedically impaired, the cerebral palsied, and similar disability groups; but do not believe that we can have it both ways: on one hand, retain our distinctive independence, identity, and integrity—avoiding confusion with others—and on the other hand, coalesce with such groups for special purposes: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this 5th day of July, 1974, in the city of Chicago, Illinois, that the President of the National Federation of the Blind be instructed to express to all interested groups and representatives of the handicapped the goodwill and best wishes of the Federation and its firm decision to retain its separate identity and independence of action in all matters affecting the welfare of the blind; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no state or local affiliate of the Federation shall enter into any coalition or association with any other minorities, the deaf, the orthopedically impaired, the cerebral palsied, or similar disability groups.

President JERNIGAN. OK, that's the resolution. Let me first say what I think it means, and how it will be interpreted. This is in the nature of building legislative history. The Constitution of the National

Federation of the Blind provides, as you know, that decisions of this Convention are binding upon affiliates, state and local. Therefore, if this passes, it is not a suggestion; it is a mandate. What does it mean? As far as I'm concerned, it means this: That the purpose of the organized blind movement is to deal with problems concerning the blind; that the purpose of this movement should not be watered down to do other things. But if individuals wish to go out and join coalitions, if they wish to join *any* other kind of organization, that is their business. Insofar as we are an organization, that we will not enter into any coalition for any purpose. Now, does that mean that we can't help another group or support another group in something? No, it does not mean that at all. But it does mean that we may not form organization coalitions. That is, an affiliate of ours cannot join, formally, an organization coalition. We can support a bill, that's the same as somebody else's bill—that's fine. In the State of New York recently, as an example, our affiliate there worked on a human rights bill. I have learned that although our affiliate had started sponsorship of that bill, that although our affiliate paid a lot of the costs involved in having one of our members serve as chairman to work on that bill, that when it came down to it and the bill got passed, the person said that she was acting in the name, *not* of our affiliate, *not* of the blind, but of the coalition of handicapped. Well, I think that doesn't help us. I think it causes all kinds of problems.

I am concerned about something else; I'll quickly give it to you like this: The problem we face, I think, is that on one hand, we spend a lot of time saying that we are opposed to umbrella agencies. We don't think that the needs of the blind and the

orthopedically impaired and other groups, are the same; we don't think we ought to all be mixed into one umbrella agency—we fight lumping us together. We do that and we say that we've made advances out of the old almshouse when the blind, and the alcoholic, and the sick, and the disabled were all just thrown into one big cell—we say that we've made progress. Now, recently we've seen efforts to lump us back together and one of those efforts came when there was an attempt to abolish the Office for the Blind in Federal Rehab and to put it into the Office of Special Populations. I don't, for the life of me, see how we can take that stand, then go over and say, "But our needs are similar and therefore we ought to join with these other groups in coalitions to have our common needs met." That doesn't make sense to me. [Applause] I think, also, that the other groups are not helped by the coalitions but are hurt by them. I'll give you an example of what I mean. I think that if you go back to 1948 when the organized blind movement fought to have fifty dollars exempt income in public assistance to the blind, we would have had no chance whatever if we had tried to have public assistance for the blind, the disabled, ADC, the aged—have fifty dollars exemption on earnings not to be counted against public assistance. We passed that bill, and, as you know, it was vetoed; and in 1950 we passed it and it was signed by the President. Later on the exemption was expanded so that eighty-five dollars a month could be exempted and then after that fifty cents on the dollar. And then what happened? By and by, all groups got it under the new SSI—and in the sixties, as a matter of fact, under the old State-Federal program. In other words, our gain was made possible because we were such a small group that it wouldn't have

hurt the Treasury too bad even if what we said should have happened, didn't happen. That is, we said, "Give us this earned exempt income and it won't cost the Treasury; it will actually be good for the Treasury because there'll be enough employment, enough tax dollars saved, to make it pay out." Congress would never have taken that chance, in my opinion, if the whole group had been involved because too many hundreds of millions of dollars would have been in question. But as it was, we served as the pilot program, we proved it could happen, and then all the groups got it. So everybody benefited by that system. [Applause]

Finally, you will remember what happened in the Division for the Blind in the Library of Congress. In the beginning that program was just for the blind. Then came along the wish to have it for the blind and for the physically handicapped. We said we thought that that was a problem and we opposed it. We were accused of being selfish and mean for doing it. Then we came back after some soul-searching and not wishing to be bad people, we went before the Congress and said we'll support it; but we're afraid that once you let the whole group in there... that the larger group will begin to get the emphasis and service to the blind will suffer. We said, "We're not against reading matter for the other physically handicapped. In fact, we'll help; we'll support a bill to have a Division for the Physically Handicapped; but leave our division alone." Well, it wasn't done. They had the blind and the physically handicapped. And if you will remember, in the matter of a couple of years the Division for the Blind began to make a change; it was a minor change, it was not extremely significant except for the fact of what it indicated about the emphasis that was

being given. In the old days you'd had the Braille on side one of the talking book records. Why had you had it there? Well, because you opened them up and you could see what's there. The print was on the flip side. It's no great trouble to reach in there and turn over a record and see what's on the flip side. Pretty soon the Braille got to being on the flip side and the print on the top side—and so somebody said we're quibbling. And we said, "Yes, it's not any great trouble to reach in there and turn the record over. We know that. But we're just telling you that shows the emphasis that's being changed." So we raised a row about it and got it reversed and changed back. I would have much preferred, for my part, to see the Division go in such a way that we would have had a Division for the Blind and a division for the other groups. We could have supported it, but not in coalition.

As far as I'm concerned, all of these regulations that are beginning to restrict us—the Federal Aviation Agency and Amtrack and the rest—is because people tend to lump us together and take the worst problems of any of us and think they are the problems of all of us. [Applause] I think that's why we're beginning to get campuses modified for the physically handicapped, and the blind are being regulated more—because we are thought of as being part of just one big group of handicapped. I oppose that. I urge you to adopt this resolution. As far as I'm concerned, I think it's the key to the Federation. [Shouts and applause] The Chair will now yield twelve minutes of time to those who oppose this resolution. I urge you to give them respectful attention and let's hear what they have to say. Who asked for the floor?

Dr. LEWINSON. When I first heard that the NFB President opposed the coalition for the handicapped, I thought it was a rumor invented by the ACB. It took me a little while to realize and take it seriously. It seemed nobody, certainly nobody in their right mind, would feel that the needs of the blind should be submerged to anybody else's. As members of the National Federation of the Blind, all of us are concerned with the needs of blind people and the needs of blind people first; and we must be, because these are ours. But at the same time, many of the same considerations which caused the National Federation of the Blind to be necessary, also, in the future could make a coalition effective. The fact that in numbers there is strength; the fact that disabled people with various kinds of disabilities are discriminated against in housing, in employment, in public accommodations; the fact that on Wednesday night our President so brilliantly and eloquently discussed the role of blind people in literature: the same thing could be done for the role of the cripple or of the deaf. Certainly the roles wouldn't be exactly the same. Some of them would and some of them wouldn't. But the sense of being different, the sense of being powerless, would be much the same. The needs of each group are different, and no group wants its needs submerged to others. Certainly people who are deaf or people who are in wheelchairs would not want domination by the National Federation of the Blind any more than we would want our needs subservient to theirs. And the only basis upon which—and the reason for this—and the only justification for this would be that it would benefit all groups; and I think that these are basically the reasons why this is a bad resolution. Also I believe that the climate, the general

climate, as it affects the disabled, affects the blind, whether we like it or not. We like to think we're different, and in many ways we are. But, basically, the acceptance and the equality and the treatment as human beings given to the disabled generally, affects directly the treatment given to blind people, and vice versa. And I think that in practice what sort of coalition of the disabled might emerge in the future is still uncertain. In various localities, as some of us who are Federationists know, efforts have been made to organize local coalitions; and at the meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped in Washington, an effort was made to organize a national coalition in which John Nagle and Roger Petersen participated and at which I was in the formation meeting as well.

I think that these are the reasons why this resolution is an unfortunate one. I think that the image which it will give, even though this is not the image we will want it to give—I think that the image which this kind of resolution will give other disabled people is that the blind people are callous to their needs. I know that we are not; but this is the image which this kind of resolution will give—that we want what we want and to heck with everybody else. I didn't say that this is true, because it isn't—and we all know that it isn't. I said, that I think this is the kind of image which will be put forth by a kind of resolution like this. I hope it's not. And I think that this—for these reasons—I think that this is a bad resolution and I urge that it be defeated.

President JERNIGAN. OK. Anybody else who wishes to speak against? Roger Petersen.

Mr. PETERSEN. Let me say that first of all, as Ed said, I am involved, and was involved, in the drafting of bylaws and so forth for a national coalition. The idea behind it is—and I think this should be clarified—that it would be a confederacy, you might say. That is, it would not be amalgamating everybody into one organization with the distinctive needs of all the groups submerged to the general needs. As a matter of fact, I believe that the distinctive needs of each group can be better articulated when the groups have a chance to get together and have a chance to discuss where their needs are in common and where they differ, because a lot of the time in hearings and so forth—we spend a lot of time refuting things that other groups say about us, which they wouldn't have said if we talked to them before the hearing. I think that it's a mistake to make the analogy between umbrella agencies for services to the handicapped and coalitions of consumer organizations of the handicapped. The reason I say that is, I believe these umbrella agencies are just as bad for everybody else as they are for the blind. It isn't the case, as many people in the Federation seem to think, that there are us blind people and then all the rest of those handicapped people. There are people with various different handicaps, and the administrative arrangements in these umbrella agencies are not made for the benefit of any group of the handicapped. They are made for the benefit of the administrators, and I would suspect that all groups of the handicapped would agree that it would be better to set up agencies so that all the services to one group were combined administratively instead of having all of one service for all groups in one department and another service for all groups in another department. I guess—I know there are some

other people who want to talk and I should stop. But I just want to say that I feel over the years that I've been a Federationist that this is kind of a—it's a strange thing. It reminds me of a book called *Flat Lands*, where they were in a two-dimensional world; and when someone showed the teller of the story that there was a three-dimensional world, that his perspectives were narrow because the world was really three-dimensional. He said: "Oh, yeah, that's great. What about the four-dimensional, and five-dimensional, and so forth?" And he said, "No, you're wrong, that's silly. There's really only a three-dimensional world." So, I started out looking at the needs of blind professional people, and students, and so forth, and I discovered through the Federation that those are basically the needs of all the blind. And now I want to carry it forward to a more general thing, and I'm being told that, no, it stops here. Let me stop and let somebody else talk.

President JERNIGAN. Just a minute please. I believe that the twelve minutes is up, and I believe that what I ought to do is accept a few on both sides. Now the problem that we have is if we're going to run completely out of time. We still have to have a roll call of the States on this. Let's see how many people want to speak on each side of this question. [A number of people asked for the floor.]

Mr. CURTIS WILLOUGHBY. A point of clarification. I would urgently request that the record contain a very clear definition of the distinction between a coalition, which this resolution opposes, and a coordinating committee, which presumably this resolution would not oppose.

President JERNIGAN. No, it would, too. Look here, I thought I'd made this clear. What this resolution says is the very thing that Ed Lewinson had been talking about would not be permitted. It's a confederacy, where you enter into a permanent coalition or a permanent coordinating committee or a permanent anything else.

Mr. WILLOUGHBY. But this even talks about specific issues and doesn't deal with—presumably, therefore, you couldn't meet in a committee to coordinate the approach to the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

President JERNIGAN. Oh, yes, you could. Look, what we're saying is that if you want to support a given bill supported by somebody else, that's fine. But it means that if you're going to sit down with them and this is just temporary issue by issue, but actually in spirit you begin to be a coalition of the handicapped, this forbids it. You know, one can be technical or one can be actual; and in actuality, what it says is that the organized blind are going to deal with affairs of the blind. And if they think it's to the interest of the organized blind, or if they want to for whatever reason, they can work on a given bill, or a given issue. But it's saying that they cannot be a coalition formed with other groups. Curt, does this make clear at least what I understand to be the resolution?

Mr. WILLOUGHBY. Well, not quite. Do you mean then, that you may on a specific issue sit down together to work things out—

President JERNIGAN. Sure.

Mr. WILLOUGHBY. But you may not in a committee which has a name to it?

President JERNIGAN. No, not just a name. I mean that if you sit down to work out this issue, and it develops that that committee is going to meet tomorrow to work on another issue, and the next day to another—so that it, in fact, becomes a permanent confederacy or coordinating committee—that's another question.

Mr. WILLOUGHBY. Presumably, though, you may well find a need on quite a number of repeated issues—

President JERNIGAN. If you got to doing that enough so that your local members said that in reality you were a coalition, we'd blow the whistle on it.

Mr. WILLOUGHBY. OK, then I think it's on the record.

President JERNIGAN. OK. I thought it was clear.

President JERNIGAN. Jim Omvig, the Chair will give you one minute to speak for it and then it will give Frank Munier a minute to speak against it.

Mr. OMVIG. I'll be extremely brief. I believe that this Convention is testimony to the fact that we who are blind are for the first time in our lives really experiencing the right to speak for ourselves. I don't intend for me, or for anybody else, to give up that right—so that some other group is speaking for us. [Applause] Secondly, I think that if we get too much involved, we've got so much activity that is necessary in order to improve the lives of blind people, that we can't afford the energy of using up our time to work on things that don't really have concerns with the problems of blindness. One more thing—

President JERNIGAN. The Chair intends to cut you off—you're running over your time. Frank Munier.

Mr. MUNIER. Though I do not unalterably oppose this resolution, and am willing to accept the fact that the blind should stand on their own as far as issues affecting the blind, I would propose that it should be part of the written record that cooperatives on certain occasions, be allowed. That's all I have to say.

President JERNIGAN. Now just a minute. I'm going to accept somebody else to speak against the resolution. . . .

Mr. LARRY ELIAS. I wear two hearing aids at the present time. I have as a result been denied employment because of my situation. That is the reason that I have had to go on disability. I was able to make my own way in life until seven years ago, and it was three years ago that I went on disability to get social security. It is true that I do some entertaining, but it has to be more or less gratis, and I'm probably speaking selfishly. And on the other hand, I think that you have deaf-blind people here—in fact, I know for a fact that we have one fellow here who is totally blind and totally deaf, and there may be more. And I think that this resolution could be amended, although I suppose that you could amend and amend, but I am against the resolution as it stands. . . . I am not against the intent, but I am against the resolution.

President JERNIGAN. You understand, Larry, that this resolution does not prevent us from working for the rights of deaf-blind people or any other kind of multiple-handicapped blind people. [Applause]

Mr. ELIAS. That's fine.

President JERNIGAN. It just says that we're not going to form a coalition with the deaf. But if a guy's deaf-blind, we're going to work for him. I am going to accept another speaker against the resolution. Anybody want to speak against it? Who is asking for the floor? Steve Jacobs.

Mr. JACOBS. I am wondering, with regard to this resolution—you mentioned, briefly, that if the local members thought that something was a coalition, the whistle would be blown, more or less. At what point does the local and at what point does the National decide that it is a coalition?

President JERNIGAN. The National decides on the point based on the policy decision. If an appeal is made to it, it will have jurisdiction to decide.

Mr. JACOBS. So it goes by if someone makes an appeal. That correct?

President JERNIGAN. It goes by that, or the National can on its own motion do it. . . . It is now only ten minutes away from adjournment time. Are you willing to vote on the resolution? [Loud shouts of "yes."] There was a motion and second to table. We're not going to have a table motion. We're going to vote straight on it. All right, look, we're going to call the roll on the resolution—yes, we are. We'll try a voice vote, but I don't think there's any chance you're going to get a voice vote without a roll call. [Shouts of "roll call."] And I can tell you this, if a single—look—[banging the gavel] if a single person asks for roll call, we're going to do it. This has something to do with traditions of fairness in this outfit. All right, those who favor adoption of the resolution say "aye." [Shouts of "aye"] Those who

oppose adoption of the resolution say "no." [Several replied "no."] Let me ask the "no" people, do any of you wish a roll call? [A voice requests it] All right, we'll call the roll. Don't—he has a right to do that. Please give me your attention so that

we can do this quickly. I will repeat the answers, and if I repeat them wrong, shout out. [The roll was called. Delaware passed, Wyoming was absent, and the District of Columbia voted "no." All others voted "yes."] □

THE BLIND BESEIGE THE BASTILLE OF EMPLOYMENT

BY

Dr. JACOB FREID

Editor's Note.—Jacob Freid is Executive Director of the Jewish Braille Institute of America and a member of the NFB Board of Directors.

On our part, we're not going to be an endorser of NAC. We insist upon being an equal co-maker, we are adamant in having NAC give respect and full recognition and weight to our own point of view rather than theirs. . . . NAC's denial of equality to the blind is part of the paternalistic trained incapacity indoctrinated into the blind by a dictatorial establishment.

I want to tell you today of what the blind can do, because the critical problem of blindness is the failure of too many in control of the gateways to equality and opportunity in the sighted world, to comprehend the fact that blindness is basically a nuisance; that ignorance tragically misconceives from its own cockeyed point of view as a handicap; and that the blind person today—in this room and outside of it—is a normal individual with the education, the vocational or professional training and the capacity—given the rightful opportunity to prove it—for fulfillment of his or her talents, aspirations, and potential, rather than their frustration. This is the Gordian knot that has to be cut in order that the

blind individual be judged on his ability and not his disability; so that he or she can pay the full-fledged dues as a member of society—a person of equality and dignity, and a first class citizen with the respected, positively participating and contributing member of his or her community. (I always include the female of the species in our day of Gloria Steinem.)

I want to tell you of a survey of the blind conducted by us—by our agency—which is of the blind and by the blind—to gather the necessary information required in planning the public education program. This involved the following queries: "What are the blind studying in school or college in preparation for professional, business, or other vocations? What vocations and professions are they now handling after they have graduated from college or vocational school? What are their career or job objectives? What are their secondary interests? What jobs are available for the blind? In other words, we are very much concerned that the blind not be trained for jobs which aren't there when they finish their training and education. Which areas of employment, therefore, are realistic in that they offer opportunities for the properly educated and trained blind person? Which are unrealistic? What kind of jobs, for example, are available in electronics? Or for

those with proficiency in mathematics? It is particularly important to reach and inform prospective employers and employment agencies, the blind, university and agency guidance counselors, state commissions, concerning the occupations now being capably performed by the blind themselves.

Among the questions we want answered are: What is being done to educate, train, and guide a blind person towards a profession or a vocation? Who is doing it? Who can do this? Based on the answers, the Jewish Braille Institute plans to sponsor a program of action involving preparedness of the blind for occupations and professions. Which occupations and professions offer good opportunities; what skills are necessary and in good demand? We plan to conduct an institute involving the major corporations in the United States and their executives, to by-pass the personnel director. [Applause] To discuss with major employers the successful blind in jobs and professions. Blind people have proved themselves able to hold virtually every job, except those in which sight is absolutely necessary, including the newer unusual jobs now being performed successfully by blind persons.

We have compiled a list of forty rationalizations and objections offered by employers for not hiring the blind. I'll read you just a few of them to give you the substance of how you can answer all of these, and to provide factual answers and proof refuting these objections. We've compiled a list of trade journals for articles concerning those positions capably performed by the blind now. A list of unusual occupations also obtained from the blind and employers of the blind. We have NFB material to educate the community

concerning the blind and their capacities for employment. We have a questionnaire for leaders in work for the blind which has already received an excellent response, the gist of which is that the properly educated and trained blind person can perform any position except the driving of a car, flying a plane, or performing a surgical operation. [Applause]

Our survey reveals the blind to be filling a remendous range of jobs whose gamut encompasses virtually every service, profession, and occupation. Necessary ingredients in the cases of successful employment histories include proper educational training, guidance, and placement of the blind by increasingly able and concerned professionals in work for the blind. That is why the Iowa Commission of the Blind, under the brilliant leadership of our President, has been such an important trail blazer for the others to follow.

Successful training in employment programs includes comprehensive vocational evaluation, personal adjustment training, counseling guidance, vocational occupation information, career and vocational planning, and on-the-job apprenticeship, tryouts and supportive help, by enlightened state commissions and local NFB chapters during the early stages of employment. All jobs are available for the normal blind individual with the proper training and aptitude. The facts are that blind men and women *can* and *do* work at almost every calling. As the lists of positions are reviewed they underline the fact that almost every time we think we have found the job that a blind man cannot do, we will find that somewhere there's a blind man or woman doing it successfully. [Prolonged applause]

Certain professions reflect the degree to which prejudice against employment has been overcome by public education, legislation forbidding discrimination against the employment of the blind, and the successful proven performance of the blind themselves. Today as an example for all our states—there are some sixty blind teachers of sighted students, in the California elementary and secondary schools and colleges. Three sets of positive attitudes are critical if the struggle achieve equality of employment opportunity for the blind is to win. The first is the attitude of the blind person himself, and to himself—to appreciate his abilities, to aspire through proper study, training, and effort to prepare himself to do the job on a par with the sighted person.

The second is for the officials and professionals in work for the blind to have faith in the individual blind person. Equality, like charity, begins at home, and in the setting of standards for the blind, not to sell him or her short, and to rid ourselves of the presumptions of inferiority and limitation. For such presumptions on the part of the people who are supposed to prepare the blind for competitive employment can be damning. Given faith in ourselves and our faith in the blind, we can change the public attitudes of management, employers, personnel directors, school boards and so on, to an understanding that the blind are normal individuals with the ability and the right to fulfillment of their talents, their aspirations, and their personalities.

Just let me give you some of the unusual occupations which our survey uncovered. The usual occupations—the lawyers, the teachers, virtually anything you can think of—secretary, switchboard operators, we

know. Advertising and public relations executives, agricultural economist, assistant to a commissioner of hospitals, autobody worker, brick mason, cement finisher, criminologist, ceramic expert in electronic and computer technology, chemistry, physics and industrial arts teachers, computer science, dog grooming, electrical and electronics engineers, employee relations counselor, engine and motor repairmen, glass blower, hair stylist, horticulturist, industrial relations and manpower executive, college librarian, marine biologist, marketing researcher, museum curator, newspaper reporter and feature writer, nurse, oceanographer, radio announcer, social security public relations director, tool grinder, tropical fish breeder, x-ray developer—That last guy is the guy to see right through NAC. [Applause]

Businessmen should know that they have at hand a basic resource of expertly evaluated, trained, and prepared blind personnel, thoroughly equipped to meet the qualifications for specific jobs required by business and industry. The employer who has hired such competent blind workers to his company's benefit has the proven dollars-and-cents experience based upon what the properly trained blind can do, to assure other employers that they are an important business and industrial manpower asset ready to be used, to their advantage throughout industry and business and management. Because of lack of knowledge, this segment of the labor market is often overlooked, by-passed, or given insufficient consideration. Yet it is a matter of proven history that blind people, as we said are holding factory, office, sales, service, executive positions in professions, vocations, industry, businesses as a result of opportunity and determination. New jobs and professions are opening up continually

as the blind refuse to deny their talents, and persist in applying them to gainful employment, which professional job analysis and experience show that they can do.

And here are some guide lines in the form of rationalizations why the blind shouldn't be employed, and the answers why they should, as the result of actual work situations and proofs demonstrated by the blind which make invalid those prejudgements and objections based on lack of knowledge concerning the potential of blind workers. Perhaps you've wondered about some of these arguments and whether they can be met. These are just about a half-dozen out of forty.

Can a blind person fill out standard forms and use a multiple letterhead system? Yes, the blind worker can have samples of all forms brailled and memorize the layout captions and spacing, or use a number of other alternative methods, enabling him to insert data properly and quickly.

Aren't offices usually too busy to have someone waiting on a blind co-worker, to get him supplies and guide him or her around? This isn't such a problem. Mobility, the ability to get around independently, is essential to any worker in competitive employment. Orderliness is a necessity as a skill for a blind person. Being able to find things and putting things in their right places is a good rule for any office, and the trained blind have mastered it thoroughly.

Isn't a guide dog a danger and a nuisance in an office? Some blind workers use the cane technique for mobility, some use no visible guides at all. Where the dog is used, the animal does not get in the way if

trained properly. Dog guides are well trained and objections have been overcome by actual experience with them in the business environment.

Wouldn't filing present a problem to one who can't see alphabetized, series, and number codes? The partially seeing and totally blind clerical worker is taught a knowledge of records management, alphabetic filing rules, commercial alphabetic filing rules, numerical, subject, and geographic files. Standard sized file cards are use, both brailled and printed, with names and addresses for use by blind and sighted staff members, and so on. Suffice to say, this rationalization is just that.

Would a blind person really fit in an office where a premium is put on attractive and neat appearance? Bring them to an NFB convention. [Laughter—applause—shouts of “hear! hear!”] This implies the blind are not neat, well groomed, properly made up. How do these impressions arise? Do a few street impressions speak for a whole population? A blind person is in front of an imaginary mirror at all times and is extremely careful about maintaining a neat appearance, wearing suitable attire, with harmonious color combinations (inconspicuously tagged for easy identification); attractive makeup and hair styling, particularly among women.

Isn't it embarrassing and awkward for a blind employee to be left out of social groups? It would be, but why should they be excluded? A blind person is a warm, normal, human being with all the intelligence and emotions that the Maker has given man and woman. Like all people, we can be sincere or insincere, have positive or negative attitudes, possess or lack humor

to the degree of tolerance common to most people. If employees are sociable, enjoy eating and visiting together in off hours, there is no reason why they would not accept a blind employee as one of them.

Is there a penalty attributable to blindness in workmen's compensation insurance? No. There is no clause or policy our research has discovered against hiring a normal blind person. The foremost study of insurance and workmen's compensation concerning employees with impaired sight is by Henry Descarte Jr., and Irving M. Freidman of New York. A study of workman's compensation in relation to sheltered workshops and human resource centers. It emphasizes that all evidence and information obtained from insurance company executives is that the employment of physically handicapped workers in general and the blind in particular has not increased the rate of accident frequency. The blind have very few accidents—less than the sighted employees. [Applause]

What about inspection? Visual inspection can be deceptive. In some cases, feel is better. If instruments are used, audio signals can be adapted at state expense without cost to the employer.

Aren't there some blind people unfit for the job they are seeking? No doubt. But this is true of the sighted also.

How can I help my blind neighbor find a job? Although I think he is capable, I don't have anything in my own business for him. Hiring of the blind isn't going out of fashion. Proof of which lies in the growing and innovative list of jobs being held by blind workers as updated as computer programming, key punch operators,

magnetic tape and selectric typewriter operation, ceramics technician. These jobs never existed ten or twenty years ago. Anyone who has ever employed a blind person has a challenge to imagine what can be done. Progressive state commissions for the blind such as Iowa, Idaho, Nebraska and others, will assist in vocational and guidance and placement of the blind for the employer who may wish to employ a capable blind person. Your NFB state chapter, or local chapter of your state affiliate, can give counsel and assistance in obtaining cooperation and support of followup to employers in the event there is no local rehabilitation agency providing trained and qualified blind personnel for competitive employment.

So we stand foursquare with the NFB for a vigorous, uncompromisingly independent, championing the cause of the blind, because in this struggle for equality of the blind in employment and in every other area of society, there is no second. ["Hear! hear!"—applause]

In all of this, the critical problem facing the blind in our time is the attitude of the sighted majority who control the pathway to equality, training, and opportunity, employment, and first class citizenship in our society.

What do the blind want? This can be first answered by what they don't want.

They don't want to be denied insurance, the right to teach if they are good teachers, the right to serve on juries, the chance to be considered on an equal basis for a position they are trained to do capably. What they want is the end of prejudice, whether unconscious or conscious, and the understanding that they are normal

individuals, to whom loss of sight is not a debilitating impediment, but a nuisance.

What about agencies that serve the blind?

The blind want the end of benevolent paternalism. [Applause] They don't want a hand-out, but a hand-up to equal participation on the policy-making boards of the agencies. [Applause] They want the agencies to treat them as partners in democratic participatory relationships, so that these organizations are not only for, but above all—like my own I'm happy to say—of and by the blind as well. [Applause]

We know that equality, like clarity, begins at home. We want the establishment to recognize this. NAC arrogates to itself, without the equal participation of the blind, the right to set standards in agency work for the blind. This is anathema to the majority of the blind who say we should have the democratic right to choose our own representatives to help make the decisions that affect our lives. [Applause]

Throughout the United States, capably trained, educated, blind are working at high levels of proficiency in every conceivable occupation. What we want is to become first class citizens, accepted not as stereotypes, but for what we are as human beings, as normal individuals making a positive contribution to our community and Nation. Normality is our great objective, because our wish is to lead normal lives to the end that we fully share in the American dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In conclusion, let me say that in every language there are words that are not translatable. Such as the Hebrew word

“Ah-ly-a”; . . . The basic meaning is a going up—an ascent to a higher degree of existence. It connotes optimism, hope, mobility, idealism, and is used to denote an immigrant to Israel. Return is a precipit in the annals of history and of persecution—prejudice-ridden hell on earth of the former life in the lands of discrimination and prejudice—to the promised land.

For myself, my affiliation with the NFB over the past quarter century has been an act of “Ahlya”—a going up and an ascension towards the goals of the blind, of equality of opportunity for education, training, and employment.

The era of benevolent paternalism and wardship was premised on the fact that the blind had to be protected and preserved. But those unable to control their own destiny and to be represented by leaders of their own choice need to be wards of those self-ordained to be guardians and masters. By our own attainments and achievements, we have emancipated ourselves and joined together as independent, democratic citizens in a collective movement, dedicated to the assertion that the blind person is a normal individual with a visual disability, but thereby is no less entitled or able, in terms of his own unique abilities, to achieve fulfillment.

There's a story about a date with a pretty girl—concerning different characteristics again. An Englishman shakes her hand, a Frenchman kisses her hand, an American asks for a date, a Russian wires Moscow for instructions, and NAC says “we'll let you know if she can have a date after we set standards for your conduct.” [Laughter, applause]

We do not confuse ourselves with God or dictatorship and that is why we must reject

NAC's establishing itself so selectively as a God and dictator of the standards which affect our lives. . . .

We do not ask for community control by the blind of our agencies. We do ask, however, what no democratic society true to its ideals can deny—equal partnership in contributing our own experience, insight, ability, and creative intelligence to help in setting the objectives, the standards, and the means to attain them. Not only for, but by, and of, the blind. And to that NFB “Ahlya,” as Jernigan said just a moment ago, we pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. Let me repeat what I said once before. Chick tenBroek was a Moses who led the blind out of their Egyptian bondage. He was the prophet who took his

fateful stand when he said “Let my people go.” He built well, and his chosen apostle continues where he left off. For Kenneth Jernigan is Joshua, under whose leadership the NAC walls of Jericho will come tumbling down. [Shouts—loud applause]

We've come a long, long way; we still have a distance to go and, as Robert Frost said, we have promises to keep, not only to ourselves, but to the future generations of the blind who will follow. Our fate is now in our own hands. We insist upon having a decision in determining our own destiny and through equality of education, training, and opportunity to merit God's Grace by our own talents and our own ability. Thank you. [Applause] □

THE WECKERLY CASE: SIX YEARS TO VICTORY

Editor's Note.—Since 1968 Evelyn Weckerly, and Carl Schier, her attorney, with the advice, consent, and financial and moral backing of the National Federation of the Blind, have been waging a battle against the Mona Shores School District Board in Michigan. In that year, Evelyn Weckerly was notified that the board no longer considered her a satisfactory teacher or candidate for tenure, this despite the fact that for one year and nine months of her probationary two-year period, she had been considered a good teacher. In addition, the board neglected to give her timely notice.

The case went from hearings, to lower courts, to the Michigan Supreme Court, and then back again. Each time the decision went in favor of Evelyn Weckerly, the board found some other grounds to appeal. At the end of almost six years, it

was the pleasure of the President of the National Federation of the Blind to tell the Convention of the happy conclusion of this case.

President JERNIGAN. Ever since 1968 the Weckerly case has been with us, and it's settled—firmly and finally. Let me read to you certain things about the Weckerly case and let you see how they go.

On September 5 of last year, I received the following letter from Carl Schier:

We have finally reached an accord with the Mona Shores Board of Education concerning the amount to be paid Evelyn in accordance with the decision and order of the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan entered last December. It took the threat of a second lawsuit to do it, but the board has finally ceded to our demands and has paid Evelyn in full the sum of money which she would have

earned had she been teaching during the period of the pending appeals.

The sum which she was owed and has been paid is \$39,363.31. When the school board first computed the amount which she was owed, they neglected to take account of the fact that she earned a Masters Degree in English in 1970, and they were some \$3,000 short on their final computation. However, I pointed out to them the fact that Evelyn had earned a Masters Degree, and this increased the amount which she was finally paid. The net pay which she will receive is \$27,933.43. This is after deducting taxes and her retirement contribution.

The school board also wanted to deduct a sum in excess of \$9,000, that being the sum which Evelyn was paid by the Social Security Administration during the period of the pending appeals. However, we held fast to the demand for the full amount, and this means that during the period when Evelyn was not working, she will show a total gross income of approximately \$49,000. This can in no way compensate her for the anxiety and concern which she suffered during that period, but the law has done the best that it can do and it has awarded her the full amount of back pay that she would have earned had she been working during that time.

I will send you a final accounting when we have computed taxes, charitable contributions, attorney fees, and other sums charged against the full amount of the award.

On September 18, I wrote to him as follows:

I have your most welcome letter of September 5, 1973, telling me of the final success in the *Weckerly* case. During all of the long battle, never once did I lose hope or doubt that we would prevail. Much of the credit, of course, must go to you since your skill and your persistence were key factors in achieving the victory. Much credit must also be given to Evelyn Weckerly for her courage and determination, her refusal to quit in the

face of what seemed to be hopeless odds. Credit, too, (a very great deal of it) must go to the thousands of rank and file blind people throughout the Nation who worked and waited and hoped, who gave their money and their belief, and who made Weckerly a rallying cry and a symbol.

In the years to come blind people will look back to the *Weckerly* case as a landmark and a turning point. It was here that the blind made their stand against discrimination, dug in and fought, and finally prevailed, compelling the school board to give recognition to the fact that the blind, too, are entitled to rights and human dignity and first-class citizenship.

To those who ask: "Why should I join the National Federation of the Blind? What is the good of collective action? How can the Federation help me?" we can reply with a single word: Weckerly! If we had lost, we would have fought on with undiminished fervor and determination; but since we have won, we can go forward with renewed courage and belief in the future. The day of the *Weckerly* decision was a great day for the blind. May we have many more like it.

On June 18, 1974, I received the following letter from Carl Schier: "I have enclosed herewith"—remember that we did not loan Evelyn Weckerly the money. We granted it outright so she had no obligations financially, whatever she may have regarded as her moral obligations, none financially to us, none legally—so, from Carl Schier:

I have enclosed herewith a check drawn on my trust account in the amount of \$2,692.35. This sum represents a reimbursement of fees and costs advanced to me on behalf of Evelyn Weckerly by the National Federation of the Blind. The total sum may be broken down. . . . [and he gives the breakdown of the sum] Evelyn has asked me to express to you her deep appreciation for the financial assistance made available to her by the National Federation of the Blind in

connection with the prosecution of the National Federation of the Blind in appeals. The total amount of the attorney fees was in excess of the amount advanced by the National Federation of the Blind, but Evelyn is now in a position to pay the remaining expenses herself. Evelyn has also asked me to reiterate her intention to make a financial contribution

to the National Federation of the Blind. However, I am now in the process of preparing Evelyn's tax returns from and including calendar year 1969, and any contributions she will make will have to await a final computation of taxes for all of the intervening years. As soon as I have completed Evelyn's tax returns, I will forward the contribution to you. □

